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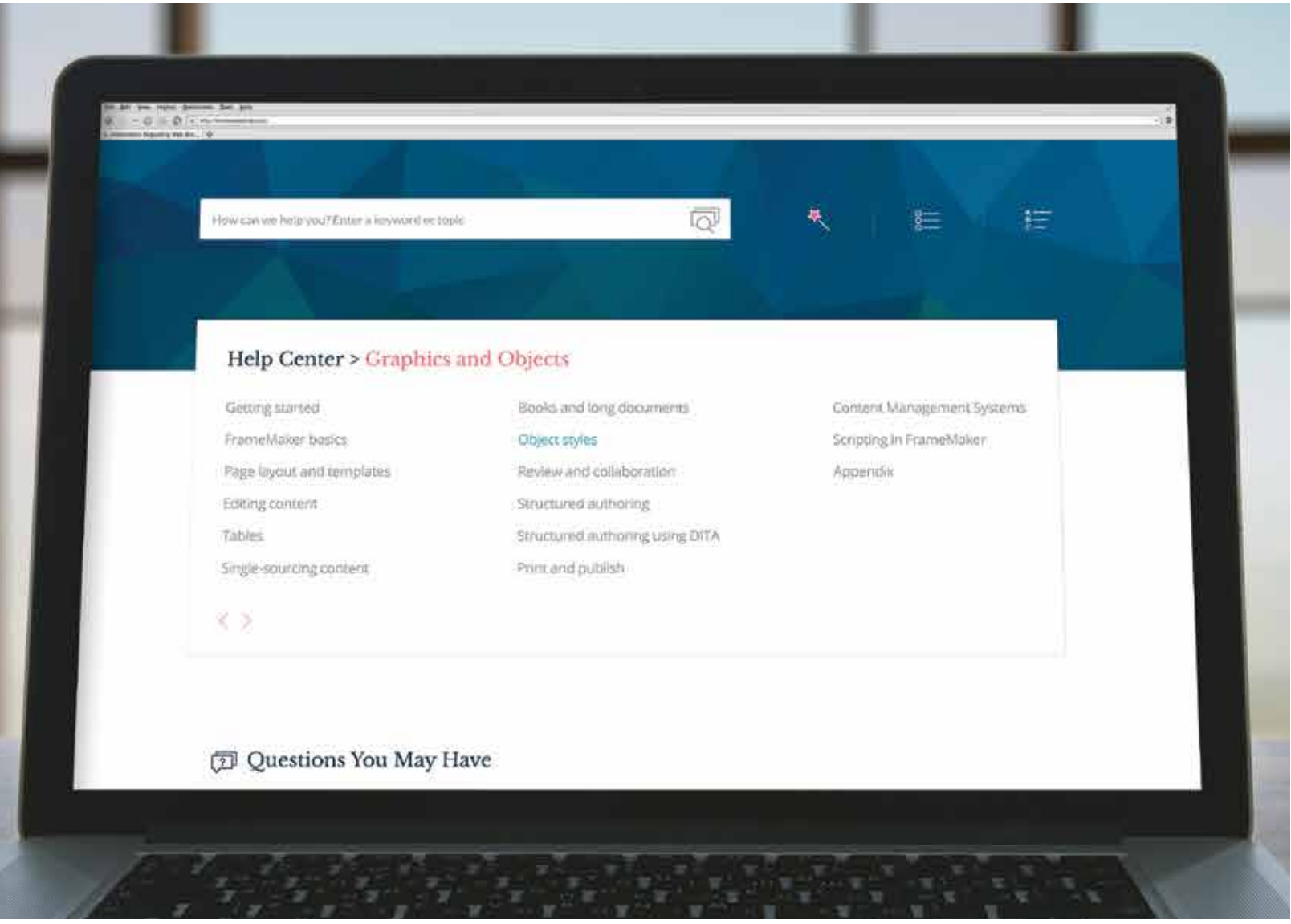

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Editor Elizabeth E. (Liz) Pohland
Assistant Editor James Cameron

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Scott Abel, *Meet the Change Agents*
Thomas Barker, *The Academic Conversation*
Nicky Bleiel, *The Essentials*
Kit Brown-Hoekstra and Cindy Currie, *Ask a Tech Comm Manager*
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SOCIETY FOR TECHNICAL COMMUNICATION
9401 Lee Highway, Suite 300
Fairfax, VA 22031-1803
+1(703) 522-4114 | +1(703) 522-2075 fax
Send questions and correspondence to the editor at the above address. General information about STC: stc@stc.org *or* www.stc.org.

Address Changes: membership@stc.org
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To advertise in **Intercom**, contact Stacey O'Donnell at *stacey.odonnell@stc.org*, Society for Technical Communication, 9401 Lee Highway, Suite 300, Fairfax, VA 22031. Ph: +1(703) 522-4114; Fax: +1(703) 522-2075.

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A Note from the Editor

I WAS REALLY INTRIGUED by Ben Woelk's interest and research in introversion and his 2016 Summit session on introversion and leadership. This is a new topic for *Intercom*, and I was thrilled when Ben agreed to be the February 2017 guest editor issue of an issue on personality, temperament, and technical communication. Ben has assembled a wonderful collection of articles on the topic that address a wide range of types and how personalities and temperaments inform professional technical communication work.

Ben Woelk is a Senior Member and former STC Director who has served STC in a number of capacities. In his professional life, Ben is Information Security Office Program Manager at the Rochester Institute of Technology where he has designed a leading cybersecurity awareness program. He also teaches courses in technical communication and in cybersecurity. A frequent presenter on cybersecurity, technical communication, and leadership subjects at conferences, Ben is developing an introverted leadership mentoring, coaching, and speaking practice and will be offering a workshop at the 2017 Summit conference, Revive and Thrive: Strategies for Introverts in the Workplace. He welcomes conversation around leadership and introversion.

Thanks to Ben and all the authors of this fascinating issue of *Intercom*. Share your thoughts on the articles in this issue online at *www.stc.org/intercom*.

—Liz Pohland
liz.pohland@stc.org

A Note from the Guest Editor

WHAT ROLE DOES personality type or temperament play for technical communicators? Do introverted and extroverted technical communicators approach their work in different ways? We've seen an explosion of books and articles about introverts in the past five years. How might these discussions of introversion and extroversion and types and temperaments play out in technical communication?

I approached *Intercom* Editor Liz Pohland about authoring an article on personality and technical communication, planning on expanding my 2016 Summit presentation, An Introvert's Journey to Leadership (*http://benwoelk.com/introverts-journey-leadership*), into an article of interest to both introverted and extroverted readers. Liz agreed to the article, but asked if I'd be interested in guest editing an issue devoted to the subject and questions raised when considering personality, temperament, and technical communication. The answer was a resounding YES!

My challenge was to identify articles and authors. Although I'd had many follow-up discussions with attendees of my Summit session, and had discussed my introversion and my approach to leadership a number of times, I wanted to ensure that we were presenting a balanced, non-introvert-centric view of the importance of personality and temperament. Although most of the authors are introverts, I think you'll find that we've accomplished that task and provided helpful information as well.

One of the most exciting aspects of this issue is the inclusion of Janine Rowe's article, "The Intersection of ASD and Technical Communication." Janine is a colleague at the Rochester Institute of Technology who works with students on the Autism Spectrum. Inspired by the work of Kimberly Elmore on technical communication and ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), we decided that it would be valuable to share the perspectives of two technical communicators with ASD and how ASD informs their professional life and work. Thank you to Danielle Villegas and Myles Cryer for their insights as technical communicators with ASD.

Kelsey Loftin, "Broke and Busy: An Alternative to Traditional Persona Modeling Using Keirsey Temperament Theory," has posed an alternative to the often costly and time-consuming work needed to construct ethnographic personas for UX and technical communication. She's provided an exploratory framework for using Keirsey Temperament Theory as a cost-effective and timely method to create personas and shares an interesting example and great insights.

Andrea Wenger, co-author of "An Introduction to Type" and author of "Personality and Project Management," discusses the applicability of MBTI typing to project management, debating appropriate management styles and potential sources of conflict. Andrea has been leveraging personality typing in her work as a technical communicator and as a novelist for several years.

Stephanie Whitlow, an extrovert, has written a whimsically entitled article, "How to Spot an Extroverted Technical Writer and Other Mythological Creatures," discussing her keen interest in MBTI and the insights that's brought her in relating to co-workers of different personality types (and understanding her own tendencies and preferences).

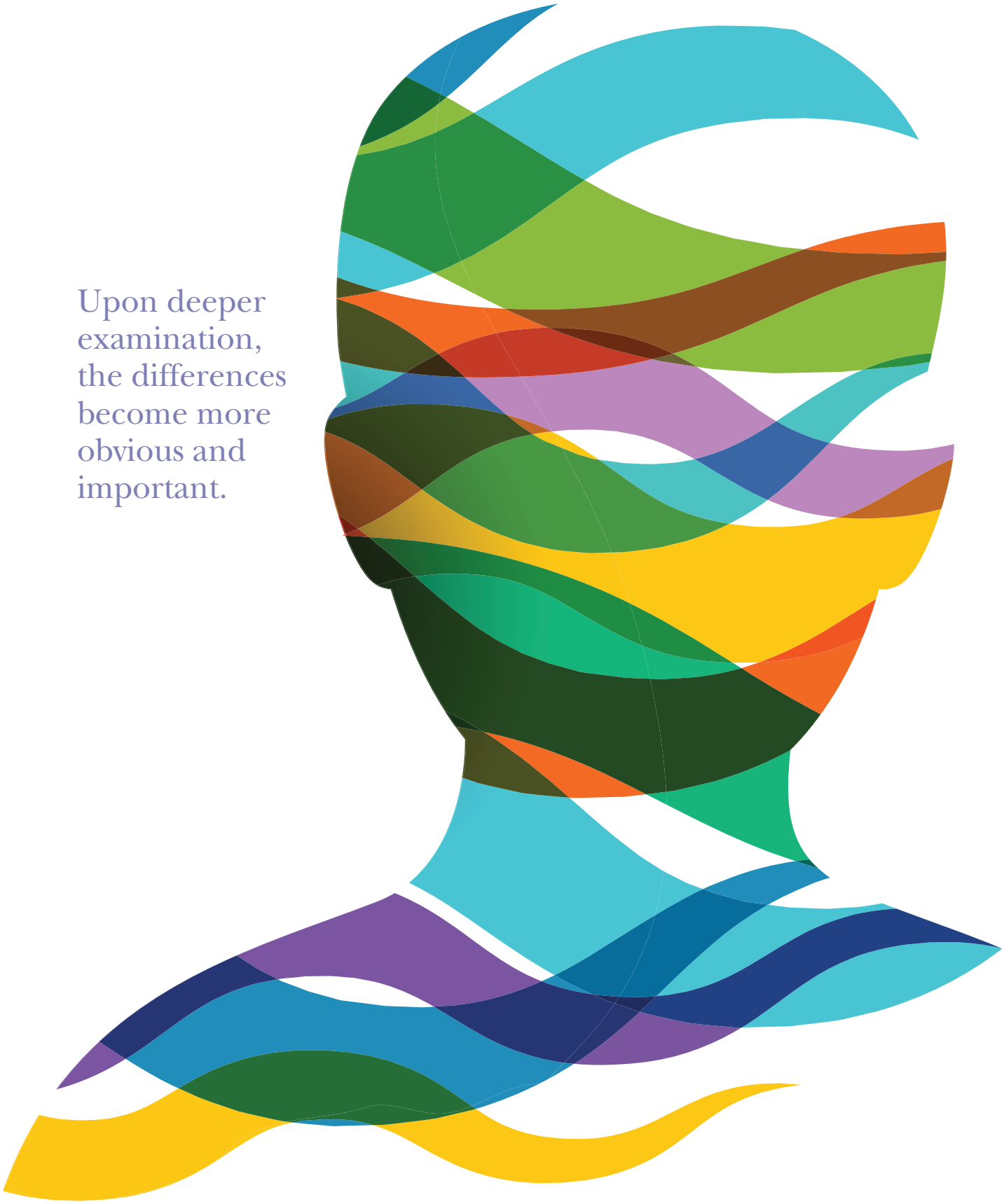
Alisa Bonsignore, "Introverted Entrepreneurship: Embracing Your Introvert Skills," discusses her career development from the "tall quiet one" to a successful entrepreneur. She reveals how she's developed favorable client relationships, as an introvert, and the advantages of understanding her personality type.

Christine Christiansen, "Applying Temperaments When Managing a Team," discusses how she's using the concepts from MBTI and Keirsey to glean new insights for her management role. Christine was a first-time attendee at the 2016 Summit and we connected shortly afterwards.

I think you will enjoy this issue. We're exploring topics a bit off the beaten path, but relevant to your professional and personal lives. I recognize that there's disagreement about the validity of personality typing, but the contributors to this issue of *Intercom* have found that understanding type and temperament is useful in their work, both in teams and with clients.

—Ben Woelk
Ben.woelk@gmail.com
@benwoelk
https://www.linkedin.com/in/benwoelk

Upon deeper examination, the differences become more obvious and important.



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An Introduction to Type

By ANDREA WENGER | *STC Associate Fellow* and BEN WOELK | *STC Associate Fellow*

THE ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE refer to a variety of different personality typing systems. Even when these systems use the same terminology, the meanings may differ slightly.

For instance, while the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS) and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) measure personality according to the same scales, their approach to personality type is very different. While the MBTI focuses on the internal workings of the mind ("cognitive processes"), the KTS is more interested in observable behavior. The KTS groups the 16 personality types into 4 temperaments, and highlights the similarities between them. The MBTI, by contrast, delves deeply into each of the 16 types and into the layers of cognitive processes that contribute to individual personality.

It's important to note that although individuals are grouped into the 16 different personality types, the personality types are not distributed evenly across the population, with some types being fairly rare. For example, Andrea is an INFJ while Ben is an INTJ. Although the statistics vary, INFJs comprise only 1.5% of the population, while INTJs comprise 2.1%. In contrast, ESTJs comprise 8.7%, while ESFJs comprise 12%. In the Myers-Briggs's table, extraverts and introverts are pretty equally divided, while Ss comprise 73.3% and Ns 26.7%. S (Sensing) individuals typically are focused on concrete concepts, while N (iNtuitive) individuals are more interested in abstract concepts.

	Total		ISTJ	ISFJ	INFJ	INTJ
E	45–53%	49.3%	11–14%	9–14%	1–3%	2–4%
I	47–55%	50.7%	11.6%	13.8%	1.5%	2.1%
S	66–74%	73.3%	ISTP	ISFP	INFP	INTP
N	26–34%	26.7%	4–6%	5–9%	4–5%	3–5%
T	40–50%	40.2%	5.4%	8.8%	4.4%	3.3%
F	50–60%	59.8%	ESTP	ESFP	ENFP	ENTP
J	54–60%	54.1%	4–5%	4–9%	6–8%	2–5%
P	40–46%	45.9%	4.3%	8.5%	8.1%	3.2%
			ESTJ	ESFJ	ENFJ	ENTJ
			8–12%	9–13%	2–5%	2–5%
			8.7%	12.3%	2.5%	1.8%

Table 1. The table is based on MBTI® results from 1972 through 2002, including data banks at the Center for Applications of Psychological Type; CPP, Inc; and Stanford Research Institute (SRI), from www.myersbriggs.org/_images/estimated_frequency_table.gif.

If these concepts are new to you, it may be most helpful to start with the basics: the four scales, also called dimensions of personality. This is where the bulk of the benefit lies. For instance, if you understand that extraverts tend to do their best work by discussing ideas with others, while introverts tend to do better by spending time reflecting alone, you can take immediate practical steps in your work life to improve communication and workflow.

If any of the typing systems discussed in this issue resonate with you, you may wish to delve into them further. Upon deeper examination, the differences become more obvious and important. The systems are complementary, each offering unique insights. Use the concepts that you find helpful.

Typing of various kinds is used extensively by many corporations when determining the best fit for prospective or current employees. They provide useful tools for the workplace, but don't necessarily capture the nuances of an individual employee. We all differ. Typing may help us understand our own and others' workstyles, but they're not determinative of an individual's behavior or performance. Other "typing" tools used in the workplace include DISC® and Emotional Intelligence (from the work of Daniel Goleman).

FURTHER READING

Briggs-Myers, Isabel, and Peter B. Myers. 1995. *Gifts Differing: Understanding Personality Type* (CPP), Reprint Edition.

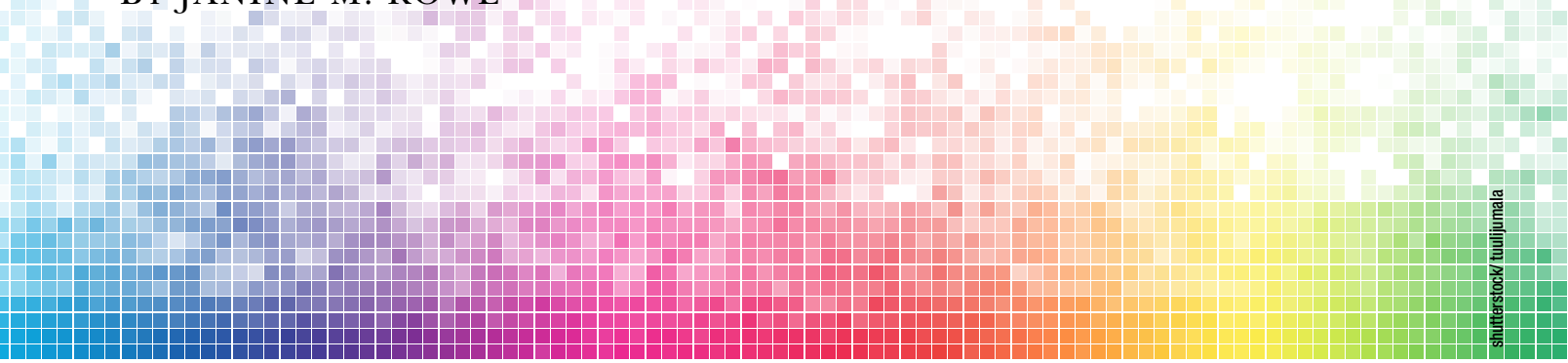
Cain, Susan. 2012. *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking.* New York, NY: Crown.

Keirsey, David. 1998. *Please Understand Me II: Temperament, Character, Intelligence.* Delmar, CA: Prometheus Nemesis Book Company.

Jung Typology Test, *www.humanmetrics.com* (accessed 11 April 2016).

The Intersection of ASD and Technical Communication

By JANINE M. ROWE



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AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder currently affecting about 1 out of every 250 individuals. Autism Spectrum is a "spectrum" disorder, which means that if affects each individual differently. No one descriptor is accurate for all people with ASD, however, a deficit in social communication and social interaction is most often noticed. For example, individuals on the Autism Spectrum may have difficulty interpreting non-verbal communicative behaviors, such as tone, facial expressions, or other subtle messages. A lack of social reciprocity may be noticed, including delayed verbal responses and reluctance to initiate conversation. Autism Spectrum is also associated with benefits that are assets in many different types of roles, including intense interest in defined topic areas, an encyclopedic memory, attention to detail, and strong logic and analytic skills.

At Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY, we enjoy a diverse student population including many students with disabilities and a large group of students who identify as being on the Autism Spectrum. Our Disability Services and Career Services offices work together to support the career development of students and alumni on the Autism Spectrum, who are highly capable but sometimes under-utilized by employers. This article combines the experience of two telecommunications professions who identify as being on the Autism Spectrum, Myles Cryer and Danielle Villegas. An interview with Cryer, describing his experience as a telecommunications professional with ASD, is available at on page 10 in Appendix 1.

Unique Qualifications

Intense interest and attention to detail

Intense interest and attention to detail often mean that individuals on the Autism Spectrum are uniquely qualified for positions in the technical communication field. "A misplaced comma or the use of the wrong word in the wrong context can potentially lead to negative business consequences or a misunderstanding of the material by end users," says Cryer. "An obsession over details within technical communication is a positive attribute that those with ASD can use to their advantage to ensure documentation is as accurate as possible." Intense interest can allow for an ability to focus on a specific area of work and notice details that others may have missed. "Deep interest prompts more attention to details, for sure. If it's something that the ASD person enjoys doing or it's a topic that they are interested in, they'll be happy to do it quickly and efficiently, and done to as close to perfection as possible." says Villegas.

Preference for factual information, routines, and structure over abstract ideas

Individuals on the Autism Spectrum may have a natural preference for routine, organization, and factual information. This leads to their ability to create structure, pathways. This is "especially helpful with writing screens, manuals, and other technical communication documents that need organization to work well," says Villegas. Cryer reports that he enjoys the ability to navigate through technical information easily, and the ability to understand and translate technical information to a wide variety of audiences. "When providing technical documentation for end users of a product or service, the technical communicator must be able to understand how an end user may interpret written material. When editing material, taking a literal approach can help one to understand the way an end user may interpret certain aspects of that material—especially when communicating processes and procedures," says Cryer.

Exceptional talents

In addition to often having an above average intellect, employees on the Autism Spectrum may have highly developed and defined skill sets. Villegas described a blend of creative and technical talents that are useful in her daily work. "[Technical communicators] take what's technical, and creatively write about the topics in a way that's user-friendly and comprehensive. It's making an art out of something technical." Both Cryer and Villegas have experienced difficulties interpreting clients' abstract statements, so they developed additional skill sets to help define their needs. Because he does not take information at face value, Cryer has found that he has an advantage in soliciting factual, detailed information. Villegas finds it helpful to ask lots of questions and learned about the ideal way that customer service inquiries should be handled so she could replicate these skills in her work. Both also used their abilities to recognize patterns and routine to streamline their work. For Villegas, she finds that creating content architecture strategies in content management systems comes easily: "It's really all about creating the structure and organization so that it makes sense and flows!"

Potential Barriers

Multitasking

Some tasks and projects may naturally be more challenging for employees on the Autism Spectrum. Multitasking can be especially challenging, especially if the tasks are new. Villegas explains that individuals on the Spectrum are wired for focus and attention to detail, meaning that multitasking might be limited to a few tasks at once, where a "typical" person (someone not on the Autism Spectrum) may be able to take on several. Villegas also pointed out that being assigned large tasks at the last minute and negotiating changing deadlines can feel especially overwhelming and require a bit more time and effort to process through those tasks.

Social interaction

Supervisors of individuals on the Autism Spectrum may wonder if their employees will be comfortable working with clients and on teams in the workplace. Villegas explains that empathy and perspective-taking require more energy and time and may not come naturally, but can develop with practice and coaching. "As with a lot of social interactions, I had to be taught how to react, how to put myself in the other person's situation, and how to devise solutions in that setting. Coworkers and managers can help the tone and help you as you work with your clientele and needs to fill in those blind spots." Cryer found tasks like public speaking particularly stressful, and while it does not come naturally to him, he practices skills such as modulating his voice when necessary and smiling as not to appear bored. Cryer and Villegas also worry that their tendencies for asking questions—an essential practice for uncovering information that others may inherently understand—can come off as rude or redundant.

Working with Someone on the Autism Spectrum

Sharing that one is on the Autism Spectrum with co-workers or supervisors is a very personal decision. Employees must weigh the impact of stigma and assumptions and the desire to be open with their co-workers. While the Americans with Disabilities Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, implicit biases may negatively impact the hiring and promotion of practitioners on the Autism Spectrum. Villegas stated that she does not always find it necessary to share that she is on the Autism Spectrum with her co-workers. If she does decide to disclose, Villegas says that she "treats it just as if I had any other learning disability. It doesn't impede my other skills and talents. I treat it like any other potential weakness I might have as an employee. Someone else may be weak with digital skills and literacy, so as a team member, I would fill in that gap. I'm weak in other ways, and that person can fill that gap." Cryer reported that he has not made a habit out of discussing being on the Autism Spectrum with his co-workers, but that he did discuss it privately with his co-workers so they could better understand his experience with public speaking.

Appendix 1: An Interview with ASD Practitioner Myles Cryer

The Intersection of ASD and Technical Communication

Rowe: *Can you share a bit about your background and about how you experience ASD?*

Cryer: *I think it's appropriate to first start with the particular ASD (Asperger's) challenges I face on a personal level, since symptoms and experiences can range on the spectrum. Perhaps the most challenging aspect I face is social anxiety and an inability to fully comprehend basic social cues and rules. It's difficult for me to engage in small talk, whether in large or small settings, as I prefer to listen to surrounding conversations than to immediately offer my own opinions. Partly, I don't immediately engage in conversation because I don't want to say something without having thought through every aspect of what I want to say. However, I often find that I simply go blank when in social settings, especially when attempting to engage in small talk. I could talk about the feasibility of sending humans to Mars for hours, but I find it exceedingly difficult to talk about my plans for the weekend. In a business setting, I'm often praised for my ability to understand and discuss complex processes, but I have never learned how to engage in pre-meeting small talk before those discussions take place.*

Rowe: *Has ASD impacted your career? How?*

Cryer: *After receiving a Masters in Technical and Professional Communication, I accepted a position as a Major Incident Manager for an IT consulting company working on a state contract for IT service integration and data center consolidation. You may say this role didn't align with my degree (and you'd be right), but I needed a job, and I saw this role as an opportunity to get my foot in the door with an IT company.*

This particular role challenged almost every aspect of my ASD symptoms. Incident management requires continuously leading conference calls in a high-stress environment, ensuring various people are engaged in the right place and at the right time, delivering status communications on a regular basis, updating the ticketing system's status log, and convincing IT personnel to stop what they're doing and immediately resolve a critical issue. All of these actions are performed simultaneously, meaning one must have an ability to multitask and focus on several critical actions at once.

However, I quickly discovered there is a repeatable routine for every incident, even though each incident is different in nature. Once I understood the pattern of incident management and how those patterns connect with the overall process, I was able to overcome aspects of the job for which many people eventually quit (the role has an exceedingly high turnover rate). In this respect, my propensity for routines helped me to quickly understand the overall incident process.

Two common symptoms of ASD are reduced abilities for "small talk" and the literal interpretation of communication. In incident management, these two traits are actually beneficial to the job. When on incident bridges (technical conference calls), small talk often distracts from solving the problem and can result in technical engineers losing focus on the issue. Further, since it's the responsibility of the incident manager to update the ticketing system with each action performed during the course of the incident and to deliver status communications, it's imperative that each status entry and communication explicitly state, without embellishment, each action taken. Thus, my ASD became a benefit when communicating technical information and actions.

My current role as Communications Manager has been more challenging from a social interaction perspective. A person in this role is responsible for not only delivering enterprise communications, but to also create and maintain business relationships at all levels, from entry-level to executive personnel. Many aspects of social interaction that most people inherently understand are exceedingly difficult for me. A few examples include difficulty maintaining close relationships, problems reading non-verbal cues, and little ability for small talk.

One aspect of my role that I've found particularly difficult to overcome is leading our account's All Hands meeting. This forum is an in-person meeting with approximately 150 attendees, and my role is to emcee the forum. Given my uncomfortableness in social settings and a high level of stage fright as a result, speaking in front of so many colleagues has proved to be a challenge. My mind will often go blank in the middle of a sentence, I must actively attempt to modulate my voice to prevent myself from speaking in monotones, and I find it difficult to directly look at the audience's faces. However, much practice has allowed me to overcome many aspects that I found difficult at the beginning, although I still do not find that practice makes these elements come naturally. For someone with ASD, we must constantly remind ourselves to look at the audience, modulate our voice, write important points on notecards, and smile so as to not appear bored.

In this role, I write and deliver communications to a wide variety of stakeholders on technical topics, assist in the

Tips for Managers, Supervisors, and Coworkers

If you are working with, or think you are working with, someone on the Autism Spectrum, the following suggestions can help that person shine.

1. Develop an understanding of the general challenges and strengths associated with ASD.
2. Give clear and detailed instructions and make sure your instructions are understood.
3. Ensure that the workplace is a comfortable environment to ask questions, remembering that asking for help might feel embarrassing for the individual. Give instruction on who the individual should go to with questions, and encourage emailing questions. Consider that an employee who is "asking too many questions" may be trying to check assumptions, uncover missed information, or gain more details.
4. Provide a mentor who can provide feedback, reassurance, and explanations for vague concepts, such as the unwritten rules of the workplace culture.
5. Allow easy access to written resources to assist with the tasks, including definitions of acronyms and industry-specific jargon, or a list of high priority activities, clients, and projects.
6. Recognize that employees have different levels of comfort and interest socializing at work. Do not interpret disinterest in small talk as rudeness or boredom; opening up and engaging in conversation takes more time for some. Make social events optional.
7. Facilitate communication whenever possible. Give advance notice of topics to be discussed at meetings, and advance notice of when the individual is expected to present. Encourage various modalities of communication, especially email or texting. Coworkers can assist with social interaction by introducing the employee to others or inviting them into conversation since these tasks may not come easily.

Author's note: In my role at Rochester Institute of Technology, I create specialized career development programming to meet the needs of students on the Autism Spectrum as well as consult with employers who hire individuals with disabilities to ensure their recruiting, hiring, training, and managing practices are inclusive to employees with disabilities. Composing this article represents a new opportunity for me, since I normally work with individuals who are just beginning their careers. My students on the Autism Spectrum face multiple challenges when working toward obtaining their first internship or job, including the fear of discrimination, uncertainty of how to navigate unfamiliar corporate cultures, and living away from family support for the first time. I look forward to sharing the wisdom from Danielle and Myles with my students and their employers: 1) Certain tasks, particularly those related to social interaction, may prove more challenging but are surmountable with co-worker support and a bit more time and effort. 2) All employees have areas of strengths and challenges. Adjusting your roles, responsibilities, and job titles as your career progresses is not necessarily an indication of lack of skill. This process is advisable for any employee and can lead to greater employment satisfaction; and 3) Coworkers, supervisors, and clients will often recognize the unique contributions of employees on the Autism Spectrum, making them valuable team members.

creation of technical documentation, create presentations for a wide variety of purposes, assist in creating user guides, and create marketing collateral for internal and external use. Each of these areas requires collaboration with various stakeholders to create effective documentation, but each also allows time alone to create material once information has been gathered. Through trial and error, I've developed strategies that work effectively for me when collaborating with others on projects that overcome some aspects of my ASD.

Rowe: *How are characteristics common to ASD helpful in your profession?*

Cryer: *A few beneficial characteristics of those with ASD that are helpful in the technical communication profession include:*

- *Detail-oriented approach to tasks*
- *Preference for technical/factual information over abstract*
- *Literal interpretation of communication*
- *Superior ability to focus on an area of interest*
- *Tendency to become obsessive over details*

I'll take each of these aspects and expound on how they may benefit someone with ASD within TC.

Detail-Oriented Approach / Obsession over Details

Technical communication inherently requires extensive attention to detail. A misplaced comma or the use of the wrong word in the wrong context can potentially lead to negative business consequences or a misunderstanding of the material by end users. An obsession over details within technical communication is a positive attribute that those with ASD can use to their advantage to ensure documentation is as accurate as possible.

Preference for Technical or Factual Information

Although this may appear to be a requirement in respect to technical communication, a preference for technical information over abstract information is an obvious advantage for those with ASD. It's much easier for those with ASD to extrapolate the technical/factual from the abstract, making this characteristic an especial benefit when communicating processes and procedures. This particular characteristic also makes the technical communication profession a great fit for those with ASD.

Literal Interpretation of Communication

Technical communicators must not only understand technical information gathered from various resources, but they must also be able to translate technical information to a wide variety of audiences. Especially when providing technical documentation for end users of a product or service, the technical communicator must be able to understand how an end user may interpret written material. When editing material, taking a literal approach can help one to understand the way an end user may interpret certain aspects of that material – especially when communicating processes and procedures.

Ability to focus on Areas of Interest

If a technical communicator is indeed interested in the topic he/she is communicating, then an ability to focus on tasks is indeed a positive trait, especially when dealing with deadlines. Personally, I've found when thinking on an area of interest, I'm able to tune out the surrounding world and heavily focus on one area. This ability to focus on a specific

Appendix 2

By Myles Cryer

Social Interaction and Communication:

- Difficulty interacting with others
- Difficulty in initiating or maintaining close relationships
- Find it hard to get close to others
- Difficulty looking others directly in the eye
- May appear bored in social situations
- May seem to lack empathy for others
- Seeks out time alone when overloaded by other people
- Not seek comfort from other people
- Problems reading non-verbal or social cues or understanding/using social rules
- Very socially naïve
- One-sided conversations and little ability for "small talk"
- May appear overly shy or overly extroverted (overly shy in my case)
- Unaware of others' thoughts, feelings, or perceptions, resulting in inadvertently appearing rude or inconsiderate
- Literal interpretation of communication from others
- Avoidant of social contact or events, and may experience heightened anxiety in social situations
- Language is learned and used in "chunks" (e.g., phrases, dialogue from TV shows, etc.)
- Tendency to speak with a monotone inflection
- Communication is used for delivering or requesting information, not as a way of interacting socially
- May speak too formally for the situation
- Slang language may not be a part of usual speech
- Fixed pitch when talking

Repetitive or Restrictive Patterns:

- Overly reliant on fixed routines
- May become overly attached to specific objects
- Tendency to become obsessive over details
- May become preoccupied with a certain activity
- Highly focused on certain interests

Cognitive Traits:

- Average to superior intelligence
- Detail oriented approach to tasks, which may result in missing the "bigger picture"
- Prefer technical/factual information over abstract

Behavioral Traits:

- Repetitive movements and speech
- Superior ability to focus on favorite activity or area of interest
- Anxiety and depression
- Oversensitivity to stimuli through the five senses

area allows one to examine aspects of that area that others may have missed or neglected. In technical communication, it's important to understand various interpretations of written material and whether that material adequately answers various questions end users or business owners may have.

***Rowe:** Does being on the spectrum help to augment your understanding of your clients and customers' needs? In what ways?*

***Cryer:** It depends on the client, so yes and no. As mentioned earlier, those with ASD tend to interpret communication literally, and many business clients may hide their true needs behind fuzzy contract language or abstract statements. In this sense, understanding social cues or social interaction and communication would be a benefit in understand what a client is truly saying, so those with ASD may miss the hidden meaning behind words or actions.*

However, since someone with ASD prefers factual information over abstract, we do have an advantage in obtaining factual information from clients to understand their customers' actual needs. A client may say that their customers need better computing power, and my immediate thought is, "What does that actually mean? Do customers need better computers? Do they need greater network bandwidth or more reliable cloud computing?" Following up and asking the client these questions can lead to a more accurate understanding of customers' needs.

***Rowe:** Is there anything you recommend when working with a client or co-workers with ASD?*

***Cryer:** In the example above, I posed a question someone with ASD may ask a client. Clients and co-workers may sometimes misinterpret such a line of questioning as rude or unnecessary, thinking "you should know what they mean by better computing power." However, we may not understand the meaning behind hidden behind the statement, and asking various questions may be our way of obtaining knowledge that others may have inherently understood. So if someone is asking more questions than you believe may be necessary, it may in fact be their way of trying to understand what was said so they can meet the client or customer's needs.*

An inability to interact socially is a commonality for those with ASD as well. We may not know how to approach people at conferences, corporate events, in the cafeteria, or in social spaces. Understand that we're not trying to be anti-social or rude – we honestly do not know how to be social. Try bringing us in to conversations or introducing us to other people, since making those introductions on our own or jumping into a conversation of our own volition is not in our comfort zone.

Mostly, however, I find that co-workers or clients misconstrue social awkwardness with rudeness. This is a mischaracterization for those with ASD. We don't want to appear rude, but we're honestly unaware of social cues and norms. Be patient with us, as it may take us longer than usual to feel comfortable opening up to others and engaging in conversation.

***Rowe:** Please describe your experience of reflecting on being on the Autism Spectrum and your employment.*

***Cryer:** Honestly, I wasn't all too surprised when I discovered I was on the spectrum, and I actually think it has helped knowing that I am. I can now analyze the symptoms I face (as I did in this interview), why I face those symptoms, and how to overcome them. In terms of employment, I do not expect knowing that I am on the spectrum to change the way I look at my current employment position or, should I seek other employment opportunities, the way in which I would approach other potential employers. Actually, I believe I'm now much more confident in discussing drawbacks and weaknesses that result from being on the spectrum and the ways I've overcome those challenges. I don't feel that I would openly volunteer such information in the course of normal workplace conversation, but should the topic arise, I'm now in a much better position to speak with authority and confidence on the subject, whereas I might previously have deflected to another topic.*

JANINE M. ROWE, *MSEd., NCC, is a career counselor and Assistant Director of Disability Services at Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. In addition to providing developmental career counseling, she provides education and advocacy for students with disabilities and consults with employers hiring individuals with disabilities. She is the winner of New York State's Early Career Professional Award and has written numerous articles and presentations regarding best practices for employing individuals with disabilities.*

RESOURCES

http://aspergerstest.net/aspergers-checklist/

http://www.autism.org.uk/about/what-is/asperger.aspx

http://www.aspergers.ca/what-is-asperger-syndrome/common-traits/

Broke And Busy:

An Alternative to Traditional Persona Modeling Using Keirsey Temperament Theory

By KELSEY LOFTIN

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IN AN IDEAL WORLD, after finishing the user research and requirements gathering for each new project, I could put in an order for a half dozen mini-users. I would keep a desk drawer with matchbox beds for Jill, Debra, and Harvey, and they would hang around and answer my questions for the duration of the project. Unfortunately, science has not yet blessed us with pocket-size interactive personas. However, I can ask someone on my team to study a persona and become the archetypal user, which gives me unlimited access to Jill, Debra, and Harvey. Choosing one of the personas, this exercise in method acting is a useful way to gain a deeper understanding of Jill's motivations and what she needs from the product.

In this article, I propose an alternative to persona modeling that deviates from the traditional method of using first-hand, ethnographic research to inform persona creation. Traditional research methods cannot completely remove the barriers of cost, time, and buy-in from decision makers that keep many product development teams from modeling personas based on ethnographic insights. Instead of creating no persona or a persona based on no research at all, I suggest that teams model their personas using a curated set of personality types developed through a long-term ethnographic study of behavioral patterns called Keirsey Temperament Theory™. By focusing on an applicable and sound theory to identify a persona's personality type and underlying motivations, teams can gather results similar to those uncovered by traditional methods.

Personas are a staple in the fields of user experience (UX) design and technical communication, and should not be eliminated from the design process due to budget and time constraints. The purpose of a persona is to give writers, designers, and developers a specific end user to consider when building features, interactions, and experiences. By designing for the user archetype Jill represents—with her motivations and patterns of behavior well understood—we can satisfy the larger group of users Jill represents. In his essay "Ad-Hoc Personas and Empathetic Focus," Don Norman sums up the value of applying personas to the design process:

> Personas, by emphasizing the several different kinds of unique individuals who will be using the product, aid the designer in maintaining focus, concentrating on design aspects that the individual Personas need and eliminating from the design things they will find superfluous.

Why let organizational constraints keep you from developing such a powerful tool?

Keirsey vs. Traditional Persona Modeling Methods

Cooper's Original Persona Modeling Method

Alan Cooper first developed the persona-modeling concept for software design and development teams in the late 1980s and popularized their usage after publishing the technique in *The Inmates Are Running the Asylum*. In it, he describes the purpose, value, and best practices for creating and using personas.

Cooper's approach is the traditionally used, ethnographic research-driven method of persona modeling and is meant to guide technical communicators, UX designers, developers, and others toward designing experiences for specific rather than general users. To this end, persona modeling is the process of capturing representative information about typical users and their goals based on ethnographic user data. Cooper advocates for ethnographic techniques because the research framework is based on the assertion that your interview subject's behaviors are so ingrained that they have become unconscious decisions. Through first-hand user research—specifically interviews and task-based studies—Cooper asks us to observe and record motivations and other patterns of human behavior. Those behavioral patterns and the insights form the basis on which a persona's personality and narrative are constructed. While your persona's personality may be fictional, it's based on a review of experiential research that was collected first-hand. Each identifying trait or goal included in a traditional persona is derived from user research and results in identifying a precise representation of personality.

Modeling Personas Using Keirsey Temperament Theory

The Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS-II) is a well-known tool for comprehensive and detailed personality analysis. The 70-question assessment is based on Keirsey Temperament Theory, which postulates that there are four basic categories of human behavior called temperaments, and each is comprised of four distinct roles. Keirsey's theory was published in his book, *Please Understand Me II*, which contains in-depth descriptions of the four temperaments and sixteen role types. Figure 1 shows the world's population as distributed among Keirsey's four temperaments with Guardians making up almost half the population. Artisans come in second at 30-35% of the population, while Idealists and Rationals form the remaining 10-15% and 5-10% respectively.

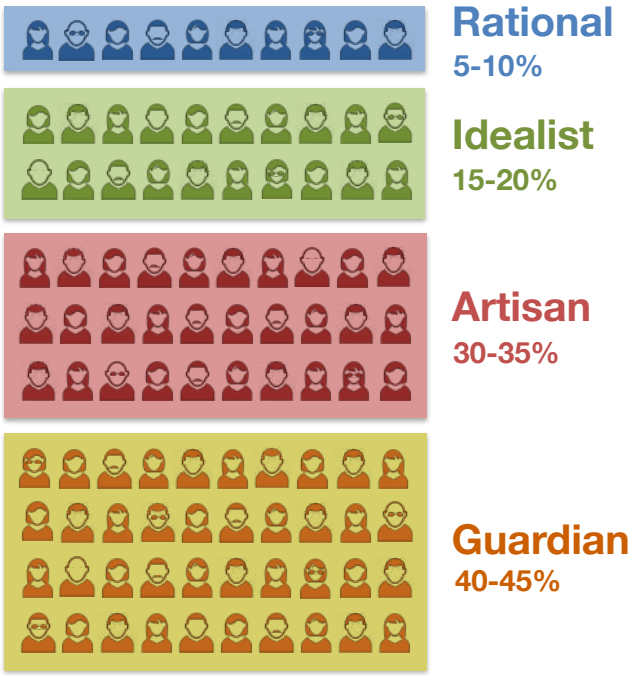

Figure 1. Distribution of Keirsey's Four Temperaments Across World Population

Keirsey identified two aspects of personality: temperament and role type. For our purposes, we will focus on the temperaments rather than the role types to ensure that the application of Keirsey's theory is based on its shared principles with ethnographic research rather than fluid opinions. For instance, role type describes what people have in mind, or prefer, in the moment, whereas temperament describes what users do through observed, long-term behavior. There is a key difference that helps us distinguish between the two: Temperament is the aspect of personality that stays the same, and role type is known to change over time. Personality and opinion are derived from a person's current disposition, or role type, whereas motivations can be found in one's predisposition, or temperament. This places motivation at the foundation of personality, and motivations can be identified by both first-hand ethnographic user research and a study of the four temperaments. Thus, both Keirsey's temperaments and Cooper's method express a credible reality for persona modeling.

However, Cooper explores only the idea of collecting first-hand, ethnographic research. Observations and interviews are the elements of ethnography most closely linked to user experience research goals. These methods are generally preferred because large amounts of data can be quickly gathered and it minimizes our dependence on self-reported behavior from users, which is often inaccurate. Still, the main reason Cooper prefers ethnographic research is because it focuses on, as he says in a blog post titled Getting From Research to Personas, "what users do, what frustrates them, and what gives them satisfaction."

Keirsey Temperament Theory accounts for each of the previously mentioned attributes of ethnography that are beneficial to persona modeling, plus it's packaged in a ready-to-use, applicable theory. Temperament theory and the KTS-II were designed to expose ethnographic insights by identifying patterns of behavior in individuals and focusing primarily on what users do, revealing what motivates their actions. These motivations uncover answers to the *why?* behind an individual's choices and are explained in detail through Keirsey's temperament descriptions. When searching for those ingrained motivations that lead to a user's unconscious decisions—in other words, a catalog of ethnographic research—look no further than Keirsey.

Applied Theory: The Keirsey Persona Modeling Method

Certainly, there is no substitute for hands-on investigation, especially interviews and field research. Participating in user research activities provides us with a front row seat to witness users' *aha* moments and learn more about the ways real people interact with our products. Often though, we are constrained by budgets, deadlines, or disinterested decision makers that prevent us from conducting this kind of in-depth user research to inform our designs. Take Figure 2 for example: The major differences between the steps in the traditional versus Keirsey methods are the accessibility factors of time, money, and buy-in.

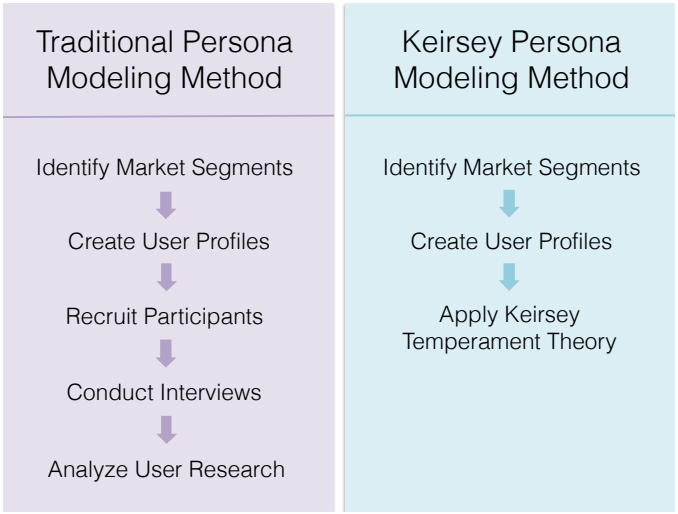

Figure 2. Steps Involved in Traditional vs. Keirsey Persona Modeling Methods

Many of us have experienced these roadblocks to research. According to Cooper, we don't have any other options. Fortunately, Keirsey offers us an alternative. The

Keirsey modeling method can make it much easier to get approval for persona development activities because it eliminates those hurdles, while providing benefits similar to ethnographic research through applied theory.

There are many tools that, alone, cannot provide product development teams with the same value as a persona. Fortunately, tools such as market segmentation and user profiles provide a foundation on which to apply Keirsey Temperament Theory and model personas. First, we must isolate the market segments that would be interested in our product. This market intelligence can shed light on the sales process, including demographics, distribution channels, and purchasing behavior. Typically, this information is used to aid in the participant recruitment process, but our goal is to create user profiles from the market segments, highlighting the types of participants we would have chosen for studies.

Meet Jill Anderson, a Keirsey-constructed Persona

Jill is one of a number of user profiles created from the market segments we have identified, and she will help us design the user experience of our product: An Electronic Health Record (EHR) application for first responders. We already understand the general need to cut down on paperwork and streamline the collection of patients' medical data in the field, but Jill can tell us how to design the software experience to meet her needs.

The characterization of Jill's personality as part of the traditional persona modeling process typically involves writing a persona descriptor, or the most prominent feature that differentiates this persona from others used on the same project, and a quote from Jill in reference to collecting patient data. In addition, some combination of her technical skills, goals, point of view, and traits are detailed in relation to the product and how it fits into her daily workflow.

Identifying Jill's Temperament by Career Choice

Since Jill can't take the KTS-II, we must apply Keirsey's theory to reverse-engineer the identification of Jill's temperament. Once her temperament is discovered, we can achieve a similar level of detail found in personas modeled on the traditional method. Keirsey's approach to personality analysis includes examining the four temperaments with respect to subjects such as stressors, career choice, relationships, parenting, school, and more, which provide building blocks for in-depth analysis and identifying behavioral patterns outside of a hands-on ethnographic study.

Keirsey draws conclusions about each temperament's career preferences based on what drives them and how they find satisfaction in life. Many high-level career fields are present for more than one temperament, posing a problem for any analysis that relies on job title only. Fortunately, Keirsey's theory is focused more on the motivations and predispositions that lead to career choice, providing the insights necessary to accurately identify temperament by career. For example, Jill chose a career in the field of first responders as an EMT-Paramedic, and we can approach her temperament analysis from that angle. Keep in mind that rather than giving us a fixed answer, temperament serves as a guide, providing insight into why she chose her career path.

Start by looking at all possible career paths across the four temperaments and their associated role types. Soon, patterns will emerge, such as Guardians and Artisans both being drawn to careers in the medical and healthcare communities. A deeper look at why Guardians are driven to these careers reveals a deep-seated motivation to serve their community and provide for the welfare of many. A Guardian may join the medical or healthcare community to become a dentist, nurse, or physician. Artisans, on the other hand, are drawn to those fields because they offer action careers, such as pilot, military personnel, police officer, and—you guessed it—paramedic. These subtle differences in career choice highlight how the temperaments use motivation to communicate different personality types.

Using Temperament to Model Jill's Persona

Now that we know Jill is an Artisan, it's time to apply temperament analysis to the rest of the sections in Jill's persona. Let's start by identifying key temperament patterns that drive Jill's actions: Artisans have keen senses, are driven to complete tasks as quickly as possible, trust their impulses, and can become stressed if the world puts too many constraints on them. More than anything, Artisans have an intense need to be free to do what they want, when they want. All of these patterns and motivations are captured in Jill's persona, which can be seen in Figure 3.

Jill Anderson
QUOTE
"This is taking forever. There has to be a faster way"
POINT OF VIEW
Jill must use the EHR application to submit a record for each patient she treats. She's hoping this new tool will be more efficient than the last one.
GOALS
• Wants the freedom to enter data with flexibility
• Needs to be able to complete records quickly
• Desires to achieve expert-level skills using the tool
FRUSTRATIONS
Jill gets frustrated when technology limits her ability to get things done quickly and on her own terms.
TRAITS
realistic
impulsive
problem-solver
excitable
optimistic
adaptable
competitive
AGE
38
OCCUPATION
EMT-Paramedic
DESCRIPTOR
Requires Freedom
TEMPERAMENT
Artisan
TECHNICAL SKILLS

Figure 3. Jill's Persona, Modeled Using Keirsey Temperament Theory

Artisans enjoy working with their hands, and seem at home with tools and instruments of all kinds. This helps us identify Jill's technical skill level, which is higher than average because of the Artisan's exceptionally keen senses. Even though Jill's age indicates that she did not grow up using the same kinds of technology she uses on the job, we know that Artisans possess the drive to master action skills. Because that drive is a long-term behavioral pattern, it evolves with the society in which she lives and leaves her dreaming of mastering new tools when they become available. Simply put, Jill isn't one of the people struggling to use our product merely because it is a new piece of technology. This means she may not need (and probably wouldn't use) an in-depth tutorial video or user manual to get her started. An on-screen tutorial when she first launches the software may be sufficient.

However, just because Jill enjoys learning new technology doesn't mean she *enjoys* using technology to complete certain tasks. Jill uses the EHR application every day to complete what must be the most mundane of her tasks as a paramedic. Jill was drawn to this career because being a first responder puts her right in the middle of the action, and filling out paperwork is not very exciting. Artisans seek stimulation constantly, and to that end, they are often impulsive. Jill believes that doing things that aren't fun or exciting is a waste of time, but she must complete EHRs because it is an important part of her job. It's likely she doesn't want to be using our software in the first place, but if she must, Jill wants to master the data input and submission process, so she can work faster.

Artisans can become stressed when they are forced to work within a structured environment with little to no give. Jill gets frustrated when her flexibility and freedom are taken away. When it comes to making choices or taking action, Jill wants to do it on her own terms without interference from the system. She resists being confined or obligated by structure and rules. (Artisans actions are generally aimed at getting them where they want to go as quickly as possible.) Combined with Jill's frustrations, this pattern of behavior points to her need for flexible parameters and freedom of choice in her product experience.

Keirsey's analysis of the Artisan temperament is the only ethnographic research used in the creation of Jill's persona. It provides a basis for persona creation because for each temperament, decisions are described through drive and motivation. These are the fundamental elements on which personas are modeled, whether using Keirsey or traditional methods. This next section pushes our Keirsey-derived persona a bit further by simulating how Jill can inform the design of our application.

Interviewing Jill Anderson, EMT

Now we can ask Jill questions about her ideal interactions and experiences with our product. For example: The job is fast-paced, and paramedics don't want to spend more time than they have to completing paperwork. With a focus on time management and ease of use, let's ask Jill pointed questions to find out how our EHR application can be best designed to make her life easier and reduce the amount of time she spends filling out patient health records.

Jill, when you're entering patient information into the system, would you prefer a chronological or non-linear workflow?

Inputting patient information chronologically makes sense if Jill worked as a physician. Physicians have their days scheduled down to the minute, unlike Jill, who has to fit her record-keeping responsibilities into the unscheduled downtime in her day. Patients, nurses, and doctors alike fill out paperwork in a calm environment that supports a chronological system. On the other hand, Jill is out in the field, juggling calls, and attempting to learn about each new patient's condition while that patient is in distress. She can't take the time to fill out form fields in order, nor would she want to. Jill's persona supports her preference for a non-linear workflow. We already know how important it is that Jill has the freedom to enter data with flexibility, but what does that look like? Her ideal experience would give her the freedom to skip from category to category based on what information she has available at the time of input.

One more thing. Much of a patient's health record is made up of required information, and notifications about empty form fields are essential to ensure complete information is submitted.

Jill, would you like to receive a notification when you switch from one tab to the next? Or would you prefer to receive all notifications when you click submit?

I'm sure you know Jill well enough by now to answer this question. It would frustrate her beyond belief to have an error notification pop up each time she wants to move from one category tab to the next. Not just because it interrupts the freedom given to her by the non-linear workflow, but that's the kind of feature that would make our EHR software less intuitive. If we give Jill the freedom to complete categorized patient information in any order, why should we force her to review each form field before she can jump to the next category? Her non-linear freedom should extend past categories to the entirety of the patient's record. Jill chooses to postpone all incomplete field notifications until the end when she can review them without frustration.

Conclusion

Increasingly, technical communicators and UX professionals, along with the rest of the product team, wish for a speedier user-centered design process. There are currently alternatives to the more time consuming and expensive research processes that were born from waterfall methods of product development, such as conducting rapid user research as part of an agile development sprint or lean UX design practices. However, neither method of research can completely remove the barriers of cost, time, and buy-in from decision makers facing many in our field. Saving some time and money by speeding up the research process is a good start, but there are still teams unable to reach even those abbreviated research goals, and are consequently, releasing minimum viable products, which can lead to product failure, damaged business ethos, and disaffected users.

Keirsey Temperament Theory provides design teams with a scientific framework based on extensive, long-term ethnographic research and psychological analysis. Parallels between the insights we gain after conducting first-hand, ethnographic user research and applying Keirsey Temperament Theory are undeniably similar. Each method is rooted in the examination of a person's observable, long-term motivations, but when time and money are an issue, the application of Keirsey's theory to persona modeling could make the difference between a product flop and a delighted end user.

KELSEY LOFTIN *is a passionate user experience and website design professional, specializing in UX research, visual design, visual communication, and data visualization. Despite this visual expertise, she still has to wear glasses. Kelsey uses her skills to design for real life, often creating delightful experiences that satisfy users' unspoken needs.*

"I LANDED A CONTRACT JOB AND COMPLETED IT SUCCESSFULLY THANKS TO STC!"

"To gauge my writing skills for a coauthor job, the publisher requested I provide writing samples. I submitted articles from *Intercom* and chapter newsletters, and got the job! However, coauthoring quickly became more than I expected. But then I checked out 'Coauthoring Without Homicide' from SUMMIT@aClick, which gave me tips on how to collaborate with the author. STC membership and the writing opportunities I've taken advantage of helped me get the job—and SUMMIT@aClick helped me complete it successfully!"

David Dick

MY NAME IS DAVID DICK AND

I'M AN STC MEMBER

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Personality and Project Management

By ANDREA WENGER | *STC Associate Fellow*

PROJECT MANAGEMENT is an important part of the technical communicator's job. It keeps us on task and on target to ensure that we produce the right deliverables for our customers at the right time.

For me, project management has always been a necessary evil. I'm bored by administrative tasks like tracking project status. I hate bugging subject matter experts to remind them about deadlines.

So I delved into personality theory to better understand what makes project management painful for me, and how I can trick myself into thinking I enjoy it.

In this article, I'll share with you what I learned about how personality type relates to project management style. I'll include information on the natural style for each dimension of personality, and well as the blind spots and how to avoid them.

The model I used was the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), but the information in this article is also consistent with the Keirsey Temperament Sorter (KTS). The MBTI measures personality on four scales, as shown Table 1. Keep in mind that these descriptions are generalizations, and every individual is unique.

The MBTI assigns a letter to each dimension, and then combines them to form a personality type. More on that later. Let's start by looking at the project management style and the possible sources of conflict for each dimension of personality.

Dimensions of Personality

Extraversion (E)

Project management style

People who prefer extraversion generally like to brainstorm and present ideas off the top of their head. They communicate regularly with other team members to discuss ideas and check on status. These types prefer verbal to written communication.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for extraversion may spend more time communicating about tasks than working on them. They risk scope creep by verbalizing impulsive ideas that sound like decisions. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "Will this discussion move the project forward?"

Introversion (I)

Project management style

People who prefer introversion tend to consider their ideas carefully before discussing them with the group. They focus their time and energy on completing their tasks as individual contributors. These types prefer written to verbal communication.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for introversion may fail to adequately communicate decisions and delays to the entire team. They may take action without considering the effect on the team. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "Do I need to discuss this with anyone first?"

Sensation (S)

Project management style

People who prefer sensation think in terms of present needs and the practical benefits of the product. They rely on past successes to build approaches to future projects. These types break projects down into an assortment of small tasks.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for sensation may view tasks at such a granular level that they overlook opportunities to combine them. They may fail to develop an overall vision that they can succinctly articulate to management. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "What are the implications? What patterns are emerging?"

Intuition (N)

Project management style

People who prefer intuition take a long-term view and consider how current changes will affect future iterations. They innovate new and better ways of approaching the project. These types view the project from a high level and fill in the details as the need arises.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for intuition may underestimate the needed resources because they haven't documented all the tasks involved. They may fail to articulate specific benefits to management and customers. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "Does this solution address today's practical needs?"

Thinking (T)

Project management style

People who prefer thinking tend to focus on an objective set of criteria. They consider problems before people. These types challenge statements made by others, looking for holes and opportunities for improvement.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for thinking may assign tasks without considering personal needs of members, leading to alienation. They may risk failure by developing a product that meets specs but that no one wants to buy. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "What would customers and stakeholders think about this?"

Feeling (F)

Project management style

People who prefer feeling tend to focus on pleasing customers and stakeholders. They assign tasks based on the skills and preferences of the individual. These types encourage team spirit and praise individual contributions, stating disagreement indirectly.

Table 1. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator: Measures personality on four scales

People who prefer…

Extraversion	Introversion
Gain energy from the external world of people, objects, and events	Gain energy from the internal world of thoughts, ideas, and emotions
Sensation	**Intuition**
Trust facts and focus on detail	Trust insight and focus on the big picture
Thinking	**Feeling**
Seek to objectively remove themselves from a situation when making decisions	Seek to empathetically project themselves into a situation when making decisions
Judgment	**Perception**
Seek closure and make decisions as soon as sufficient facts are known	Keep their options open as long as possible in case new facts or opportunities arise

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for feeling may maintain harmony by leaving tasks unassigned or not pointing out when deliverables are late. They risk discouraging debate that could lead to hurt feelings but also better solutions. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "What would I do if I weren't worried about people's feelings?"

Judgment (J)

Project management style

People who prefer judgment tend to measure progress based on whether tasks are completed. They organize meetings according to an agenda and stick to it. These types work to avoid scope creep, which could place the deadline at risk.

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for judgment tend to focus more on project management than on the end product. They may appear inflexible to customers, stakeholders, and other team members. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "Can I adapt the schedule to accommodate new information?"

Perception (P)

Project management style

People who prefer perception recognize that conditions evolve, so they focus on the ultimate goal rather than a schedule. They work intensely as the deadline approaches rather than steadily throughout the project. These types often develop informal projects when gaps are identified in the existing projects or product offerings

Sources of conflict

Those with a preference for perception may take action without getting buy-in, leading to questions of who agreed to what. They risk focusing more on the learning process than on completing tasks on time. To help avoid conflict, they can try asking, "Will exploring this option place the deadline at risk?"

Personality types

The sixteen MBTI personality type designations are formed by combining the preferences on each dimension of personality. The examples below show the questions that the ESTJ and INFP types should ask to avoid conflict in project management situations.

Examples

ESTJ questions:

- "Will this discussion move the project forward?"
- "What are the implications? What patterns are emerging?"
- "What would customers and stakeholders think about this?"
- "Can I adapt the schedule to accommodate new information?"

INFP questions:

- "Do I need to discuss this with anyone first?"
- "Does this solution address today's practical needs?"
- "What would I do if I weren't worried about people's feelings?"
- "Will exploring this option place the deadline at risk?"

For me as an INFJ, project management creates two sources of stress:

- The intuitive part of me is bored by administrative tasks like project tracking, but the judging part likes planning and organizing. So if I mentally recategorize project tracking as a judging task, rather than as a sensing task, I'm less likely to avoid it.
- The feeling part of me hates reminding people about deadlines. So by asking, "What would I do if I weren't worried about people's feelings?", I can see clearly that if I don't send those reminders, I'm letting subjective concerns get in the way of completing the project on time. Moreover, people would much rather receive a reminder than fall behind on a task. I'm actually doing them a favor.

If you struggle with project management, understanding your MBTI type can help you identify your natural tendencies and potential blind spots. By incorporating elements of the preferences opposite to yours, you may be able to improve your skills for smoother-running projects.

ANDREA J. WENGER *is an award-winning technical writer and editor with more than twenty years' experience at Schneider Electric in Raleigh, NC. An STC Associate Fellow, she's a past president of the Carolina Chapter and has served on the Nominating Committee. Andrea has given numerous presentations at the local and international level on topics related to personality type. Her popular blog, WriteWithPersonality.com, explores the influence of personality on writing projects.*

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How to Spot an Extroverted Technical Writer and Other Mythological Creatures

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By STEPHANIE WHITLOW | *STC Member*

A FEW YEARS AGO, I was attending a lunch and learn where the presentation topic was personality assessments. I was intrigued. I had heard I might be an extrovert because I had continuous social engagements, days filled to bursting with activities, and collections of friends from all walks of life. More importantly, the presentation introduced me to the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). At this point, I did what any extrovert would do, I started asking rapid-fire questions of the speaker. Where did you learn about this? How can you use this in your job? I had a million questions. After quizzing the speaker and others mercilessly, I found a training class and became an MBTI Certified Facilitator. At this point, everything started falling into place, except for one thing—my profession.

I enjoy technical writing—first and foremost, the writing itself, but I also dearly love working with a team, attending project meetings, interviewing subject matter experts, and even facilitating group review sessions. I never got the impression that I was a stranger in a strange land until I attended an MBTI training workshop. Everyone around me was an instructional designer, facilitator, or trainer – I was the only technical writer there! After the training, I had a greater sense of who I was and I started to wonder, was I supposed to be in this profession? Was I the only white horse with a horn on the team? Was I a pixie causing mischief in meetings? Or could I be a thunderbird flapping around the office?

Of course, mythical creatures are just that—mythical, but after an unofficial poll taken on LinkedIn, I found that my choice in professions was not common among extroverts. From a college technical writing course I stumbled into as an elective to beginning my profession in software documentation, I never realized that it was such a solitary calling. I began my professional career in a more metropolitan area, focusing on software related to banking and medicine. In this role, most of my counterparts were outgoing. Next, I moved to a city that was mostly government contracting, where I worked with other technical writers and, well ... rocket scientists. The writing positions I held in my new city didn't seem to fit me anymore and I couldn't understand why. After all, I was working with technical writers! These were my people, right? Well, yes and no.

Acknowledging Differences

We were all writers, yes. But you can spot an extroverted technical writer because they are not quiet, observant, and intensely detailed people. The extroverted writer is more often boisterous, energetic, and big-picture oriented. So, despite our common love of language, process, and the helpful written word, I did not *identify as* an introvert like most of my colleagues.

At this point, I thought back to my MBTI training. I still loved the profession and wanted to write, but more importantly, I wanted to interact with my fellow writers, because for me, conversation and personal interactions are like air. I need them. However, I realized that the other writers did not need this constant stimulation to thrive. They were more reserved and preferred quiet concentration to constant interaction. I was the odd one out, and it quickly became apparent that I was the one who would have to acclimate.

The professional world is truly geared toward extroverts with open office plans, team projects, and mandatory presentations. This openness feels natural to an extrovert who is comfortable engaging in group conversations and involving others in their lives to create a common bond. Extroverts adapt to change readily. For example, is the department being reorganized? The extrovert not only has the inside scoop but they lead the charge in helping everyone adapt. The boss can't attend the conference? An extrovert is ready to attend at a moment's notice and even join the social gatherings afterwards. Those who gain energy from being social love to explore and talk through complicated tasks (it's their way of thinking!). Appreciation can be shown to them by allowing them to dive into projects and encourage their enthusiasm. As Susan Cain wrote in *Quiet*, extroverts prefer more stimulating environments because the excitement therein creates a dopamine response. An extroverted temperament includes appreciating and adapting to constant change (especially if they are in charge of it), and absorbing all the new experiences that meeting people and transitional situations can provide. With seemingly boundless energy, those who identify as extroverts may want everyone to be part of the tribe—as a friend, colleague, boss, or employee—and will do their best to create a connection because they want a harmonious team.

Finding Common Ground

Bridging the gap between these two types may mean that some accommodations need to be made between both personality types. In her book, *The Genius of Opposites*, Dr. Jennifer B. Kahnweiler identifies five ways to create balanced relationships. First, opposites need to understand each other, a step called "Accept the Alien." The second step, "Bring on the Battles" involves understanding that disagreements and challenges bring about solutions. "Casting the Character" is the third step and requires that the introvert/extrovert pair know which roles each will play to bring out the best in each. A fourth step includes creating mutual respect and friendships to "Destroy the Dislike." And the fifth and final step notes that "Each Can't Offer Everything", and so each party must understand what the other can provide and use those strengths to create success. Great examples of the opposites who created success together are most notably: Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak, Mark Zuckerberg and Sheryl Sandberg, and Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King.

After obtaining my MBTI certification, I started noticing how my technical writing partners and I interacted. Sensing when they needed to be left alone and when I could bound into their offices; we complimented each other and created great work during our partnerships. As far as managers went, most of mine identified as introverts; however, we seldom had conflicts. Those managers knew how to bring out the best in each member of the team by observing and listening to us. For the introverts, they could cloister into offices or work remotely to provide their best work for the team. For the extroverts, they were allowed to roam the office (within reason) and volunteered to represent the group in meetings and give presentations. With clients and customers, the introverted among us would survey the room, and provide a strategy to give them exactly what they needed and in the way they needed it. Introverted clients preferred to see everything in writing with specific details and the extroverts wanted the same information, only they appreciated a phone call or face-to-face meeting to discuss the details.

Appreciating Differences

The differences between introverts and extroverts are well documented—stimulation vs. over-stimulation, quiet vs. noisy, social vs. reserved—but there are a few similarities that have brought both those who identify as introverts and those who identify as extroverts together. Among those is that both personality types in the field of technical writing came to the profession because they love to write. Both introverts and extroverts want to convey information and improve the understanding of a product or service.

Technical writers with these two personality types may approach a situation differently—one enjoying more of the conversation and collaboration and one enjoying the solitary tasks of research and writing. One may be better at gaining subject matter expert buy-in and seeing an overview of what needs to be accomplished while the other may be best at details, such as grammar and editing. Though meetings and work events will find writers with these two preferences being very social, the degree and frequency will differ. Extroverts will choose large circles of acquaintances to add to their networks while introverts may have fewer, but much stronger, connections.

The introverted coworkers I've worked with in the past have some theories about our ability to work well together. One contends that research and planning are her strong suits while reporting on the final project is mine. We work in concert to provide a better understanding to our audience. Another, as an introvert, also has a greater grasp of the engineering mindset and can focus on specific terminology. Conversely, being an extrovert, I can leverage my skill sets to translate our work into more user-friendly terms, thereby allowing non-engineer readers to grasp the concepts.

Situations arise where these partnerships do experience disagreement and any altercations can best be contained by communication, negotiation, and finding balance. Extroverts have no problem communicating their needs

and introverts have no issue with listening; however, these two must express what they need.

Conflict:
Extrovert: I need someone to bounce ideas off of and since we're on the same team, you understand what is required (without further explanation) of the project.

Introvert: I need down time after the meeting and a chance to process the information we've received on the project before I can discuss it with you.

Compromise:
Extrovert: Let's make an appointment for 3:00 this afternoon to discuss. I will email you my thoughts on this project.

Introvert: I will review your notes and mine and we can make a list of what needs to be done.

Conclusion:
The extrovert has set a time to discuss the project and the introvert will have an opportunity to think through what points need to be considered; both can accomplish the greater task together.

Both expressed separate needs but they managed to negotiate a compromise. The extrovert has a time to "think out loud" and the introvert has a chance to process the information.

Coming Together

When I've worked with an introvert, we usually accept the other's differences and appreciate that we are stronger together. A large part of that acceptance is the communication channel, how best to share information—verbally, in writing, or through white board diagrams. Finding an appropriate way to communicate relieves the introvert from having to respond quickly without having the chance to gather their thoughts. Understand that small talk is draining to introverts while invigorating to extroverts. A good compromise is to have the introverts call time when they're feeling drained and for the extroverts to have meaningful discussion topics in mind when speaking with a fellow technical communicator.

Being an extrovert in what, by all accounts, seems to be an introverted profession has been an exercise in understanding all temperaments. For years, I bounded through meetings, talking over my contemplative counterparts, intruded past closed doors, and started talking without preamble, not giving my quieter colleagues a chance to prepare for the onslaught of my presence. Vibrant and animated small talk pervaded my mornings as I found unsuspecting and usually half-awake coworkers at the coffee pot. Being such a morning person and so happy to be around my fellow writers, I didn't realize that they needed a little time to acclimate. Now, I understand. I receive long emails and many details about projects and I respond in kind. I instant message my counterparts and ask if they have a minute before I spring over to their desks in my usual hyperactive manner.

Table 1. Personality terms and definitions from www.myers-briggs.org/my-mbti-personality-type/mbti-basics/.

Terms	Definitions
MBTI	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, which is a personality assessment created by Isabel Briggs Myers, and her mother, Katharine Briggs and is based on the theories of psychiatrist Carl Jung. A certification to administer the assessment is available.
Identify (as)	Depending on the results of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) assessment, an individual may categorize themselves as introvert or extrovert.
Preferences	An inclination towards different interests, different ways of behaving, and different ways of seeing the world.
Traits	Patterns of behavior that define an individual's personality characteristics.
Type	Personality type is what you prefer when you are using your mind or focusing your attention.

A love of process and the written word, as well as an extroverted personality and the Myers-Briggs training, allows me to see the profession of technical writing from a unique perspective. Extroverted technical writers may seem disruptive to the team, but their vitality can propel the group through tough projects and their energy is often contagious. Each Myers-Briggs Personality type brings something specific to the field of technical communication and each is needed for balance. The more knowledge we have about each's personality traits, the better we can work together and learn how to build a successful team. And if you find you have a unicorn or any other mythical creature in your midst, let them know you've spotted them and that you know their intentions are good.

STEPHANIE WHITLOW's *background has been in software and hardware documentation and she recently added social media marketing to her repertoire. She recently started a freelance writing and consulting business called Hyper Writer, LLC. Stephanie holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from the University of Alabama at Birmingham and obtained her Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) Certification in 2014. Her volunteer efforts include non-profit grant writing and hosting round-table discussions, workshops, and presentations on resume basics. Stephanie lives on three acres outside of Huntsville, AL, with an intuitive husband, three extroverted dogs and one introverted cat.*

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Introverted Entrepreneurship: Embracing Your Introvert Skills

By ALISA BONSIGNORE | *STC Senior Member*

I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFULLY SELF-EMPLOYED for a decade, negotiating contracts with roughly a dozen clients and their attorneys each year. I regularly deliver talks to groups of 50-100 people or more at conferences. I've delivered client workshops to multinational audiences in foreign countries. I put myself out for election and I'm serving on the Board of Directors for STC.

I'm also an introvert who, if left to my own devices, would contentedly work from my home office with only email contact with the outside world.

If you put stock in the Myers-Briggs assessment, I'm an INFJ: introversion, intuition, feeling and judging. Wikipedia uses words like, "organized," "orderly," and "independent" to describe us, noting that we like quiet environments and have high expectations of ourselves and others. Suggested careers include writer, counselor, clergy, doctor, and teacher.

None of this screams "entrepreneur," does it?

So how does an introvert succeed in a business that seems better suited to extroversion? Here's the secret: you don't have to be an extrovert to be successful. You just have to make the most of the traits you have.

The Tall, Quiet One

To set the stage for my story, let's go back to 2000. I was working at a startup, fewer than 20 people, with a content and taxonomy team of half a dozen women. The management team never bothered to learn our names, which is how I became known as "the tall, quiet one." I wasn't expected to speak to anyone outside the content group, and that was fine by me.

By 2001, the bubble had burst, the dotcom folded and the tall, quiet one moved on to a prominent information security company. I stood on the periphery, still largely anonymous. But learned that I could turn on an outgoing persona for short bursts, particularly when discussing topics that I knew well.

In 2004, I moved to another tech company. I found myself in a role that required interaction with other divisions, the corporate web team, and the public relations team. I was forced out of the comfort of my cubicle. I spent my days in meetings, forced to introduce myself to strangers, voice opinions, and negotiate outcomes.

By 2005, I was managing a team of freelancers, setting team goals, meeting with stakeholders across multiple

business units, and having regular sit-downs with executives to set priorities for the group. In the span of five years, I'd learned two very important lessons: 1) I had the knowledge and confidence that I could hold my own in meetings, even with the CEO, and 2) I did not want a career where I spent my day in meetings, especially with the CEO. However, the traditional corporate career path was such that I was rapidly approaching the level where meetings were the order of the day, while quiet, reflective work would become a thing of the past.

The independent life was starting to look better and better.

Going Out on My Own

By the time my company closed its California doors in 2006 to move out of state, I was in a very different position than I would have been just a few years earlier. I'd honed skills that I didn't know I had in the nineties, which gave me confidence. Nonetheless, the transition wasn't easy

It's one thing to be the voice of a department when your salary is secure. It's another thing entirely to be the voice for yourself when your income and success are solely on your shoulders. My introversion made me want to crawl into my shell at a time when I most needed to emerge from it.

For a couple of years, I went to conferences … and sat in the back of the room. Alone. Quietly. I would attend the social events and stand along the wall nibbling on the crudité, watching silently. I would come home with one or two business cards and no new connections.

I realized that while I was learning useful things from the speakers, I was missing out on the larger lesson; if I didn't put myself out there, there wasn't going to be a business.

I couldn't spend the rest of my career pretending to be something I wasn't. I needed to work with the personality I had, not the personality that I thought I should have.

Don't Fight Against Your Type: Embrace It

While I'm sure it would come as a surprise to 20-something me, my unique combination of traits has proven to be an asset in my business. So what if I don't like speaking on the phone? I keep the calls short. I'm an empathetic listener who does her research, comes prepared, and doesn't waste the client's time. People want that.

So how have I put my personality traits to use? I've learned the techniques that work best for me in different scenarios.

When negotiating:

- Do your research: Introverts love research and preparation. If you take time to research the industry and client, you'll enter the discussion with knowledge and insight.
- Make a plan: Introverts plan, prepare and consider the options for a project.
- Offer details: Details are the introvert's thing. We're not about hand-wavy, high-level ideas. We provide clients with comprehensive plans and tangible deadlines.
- Listen: Our instincts for listening and thinking before speaking makes us seem smart.
- Empathize: When you can identify, address, and understand and address the client's pain, you become a valuable partner.
- Be concise: We don't want to talk any more than we have to. This makes it seem like we're efficient, effective, and right on target.

When working:

- Empathize: Just like you were able to put yourself in the client's shoes during negotiation, you're able to put yourself in the reader's shoes when writing. What are their pain points? How can you effectively address their needs and concerns? This is an introvert's strength.
- Plan ahead: As an INFJ, my "judging" strength means that I'm a planner. This also means that I leave plenty of time to meet and exceed deadlines, making me a reliable business partner. Clients know that I won't miss deadlines.
- Use your intuition: The "N" in INFJ is "intuition." Like assembling a puzzle, clients love that I can see the big picture and how everything connects. Having this sense of strategy and vision helps me to better understand how the elements of a project come together, and create elements that best fit their larger needs and goals.

Stay Balanced

Introversion doesn't necessarily mean a life of isolation. Entrepreneurship doesn't necessarily mean that you're always "on" and selling yourself. It's a life of balance. By playing to my strengths and finding workarounds for my weaknesses, I've been successful as an introverted entrepreneur.

Based in the Bay Area, ALISA BONSIGNORE *spends her days clarifying complex ideas, translating technical and clinical information into understandable language tailored to the needs of healthcare, network security, and healthcare IT clients around the globe. She uses humor and real-world scenarios to form the basis for her talks about professional development. Alisa has been elected to serve as Director of STC (2016-2018) and is past Chair of the Education Advisory Panel for STC and a member of the 2016 Summit Review Team. You can learn more about Alisa at* clarifyingcomplexideas.com.

Applying Temperaments When Managing a Team

By CHRISTINE CHRISTENSEN

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AS A DOCUMENTATION MANAGER, it is important to me that I am always doing my best to help my team and empower them with the knowledge and resources they need to do their jobs. It is also very important to me that my employees are happy and that their work is meaningful and fulfilling. One of the challenges that comes with management is truly understanding employees on an individual level—how do they approach their work, what they like or dislike about the process, what motivates them to do their best work—so that they can find happiness and fulfillment at work. I have found that MBTI personality assessments and Keirsey temperament analysis help me as a manager to better understand how my employees think and feel, so that in turn I can manage our department in a way that contributes to their workplace happiness.

First, a bit about me. I work for an amazing company called Cityworks, headquartered near Salt Lake City, Utah. We offer GIS-centric asset management and permitting software solutions for local government agencies and utilities. I started here five years ago as a technical writer and for the last two years I have managed the Documentation Department, which consists of a team of six technical writers. We produce training manuals, online help, knowledge base articles, white papers, RFP responses, etc. I am passionate about great documentation and I love my job.

My passion for technical communication led me to attend my first STC Summit in May 2016. There, I attended Ben Woelk's presentation, An Introvert's Journey to Leadership. We tend to not think of introversion and leadership or management as being compatible, so I was interested in hearing what Ben had to say. It turns out that decision would take me down a path of research and discovery that I never expected.

Ben recommended reading Susan Cain's book *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*. I had already read that book and loved it. It is my introvert bible. But he also recommended taking the MBTI personality assessment to learn more about my personality type. That is how I came to discover that I am an ISFJ (with leanings toward INFJ and INTJ). Reading about my personality type was interesting, but what really led to a deeper understanding of it was *Please Understand Me II* by David Keirsey. This book takes an in-depth look at personality and temperament and how those shape who we fundamentally are.

This greater understanding of my ISFJ personality has given me an incredible insight into myself. Now, when I find myself thinking or feeling a certain way, I can identify where that is coming from. ISFJs are private individuals who are reluctant to speak up if there is potential for conflict. They are hardworking to a fault—their quiet nature can lead to them being underappreciated or overlooked—and they are fiercely loyal to those around them. *16Personalities.com* calls the ISFJ personality "the defenders" because they desire to serve others and truly care about others' feelings. I see these traits in myself as a manager because it doesn't particularly bother me if I am the one being underappreciated or not acknowledged, but it does bother me when it happens to one of my employees and I will speak up then—despite my natural desire to avoid conflict.

I was curious to know the personality types of those who I work with, so I asked my team members to take the MBTI personality assessment using two websites, *www.humanmetrics.com* and *www.16personalities.com*. While I suspected that most were also introverts like myself, it was quite interesting to see where exactly they fall on the introversion/extraversion scale. One who I suspected to be slightly extroverted ended up being 92% introverted. Another unexpected result was that most of them got two different results from the two websites, which made it harder to pin down their personality types. Personality assessments are not straightforward—there can be more than one result and there is no way to guess which type others may be, no matter how well you think you know them. From my experience, it is best to have them take the two assessments and read the results to decide which personality type best suits them.

Usually our office is quiet—a group of introverted writers working on individual projects—but the day that I asked them to take the assessment was quite lively. They were sharing results, finding commonalities, and discussing the more surprising aspects of their own results. As a manager, it was great to see this level of interest and discussion. Knowing this information about themselves will only make them more aware of themselves and those who they work with.

After reading about each employee's personality type, I was able to change how I approach communication with them. For example, knowing that an employee is a perfectionist allows me to not only see when a particular project is stressing them out, but also understand why they are stressed (the tight deadline isn't allowing enough time to perfect the document). My communication is more effective and personal because I understand why they are stressed and I can reframe my words in a way that is understanding and empathetic. Or when going over a new project with an employee who I know has a personality type that prefers concrete, straightforward, and practical communication, I know it's okay to skip the theoretical or abstract ideas and get straight to the logistics of the project.

I would recommend that anyone—manager or not—take an MBTI personality assessment and read about your personality type. It's not only incredibly interesting, but I have found it to be quite empowering as well. This new knowledge about myself and those I work with has led me to be more mindful, to better understand my thoughts, and to be a better leader.

CHRISTINE CHRISTENSEN *is the Documentation Manager at Cityworks, the leading provider of GIS-centric asset management and permitting software solutions for local government agencies and utilities. She lives in a suburb of Salt Lake City, UT, with her husband and two dogs.*

10 More Places to See in Washington, DC

UGUR AKINCI | *STC Associate Fellow*

THE NATIONAL MALL in Washington, DC is truly a national treasure for those interested in art, sciences, and history. The chances are there is a national museum on the Mall for every taste.

But that's not all. There are also many other places to see and enjoy in or around the District of Columbia. Here are a selected few.

1. Great Falls Park

Visit this gorgeous national park only 15 miles from the city and enjoy the majesty of the Potomac River cascading through the Mather Gorge on its way to the Nation's capital. In certain months of the year, you can watch the extreme sports fans displaying their hard-earned skills, commanding their canoes over the frothing waterfalls. Great place to have a picnic or hike along the banks. Entrance fee required.

https://www.nps.gov/grfa/index.htm

2. Ford's Theater

Who wouldn't know about that terrible and fateful day back in 1865 when President Lincoln was shot? This is the place where it all happened, unfortunately. Guided tours are available to this haunting but captivating historic venue. The theater still offers regular stage plays and concerts. Entrance fee required.

http://www.fords.org/

3. International Spy Museum

The name of this unique museum says it all, doesn't it? If interested in cold world intrigue, endless and fascinating trivia about spying methods and things clandestine, this is your place. Test how good a spy you might've made through the "interactive spying experiences." Educational entertainment for all Bonds and would-be Bond villains.

http://www.spymuseum.org/

shutterstock/ Jon Bilous

View of rapids in the Potomac River at sunset, at Great Falls Park, Virginia.

4. National Museum of Women in the Arts

A not very well-known national museum dedicated to supporting the women in the arts. Classical and contemporary paintings, sculptures, and installations.

https://nmwa.org/

5. Mount Vernon

The house where George and Martha Washington have lived. A well-kept historic treasure perched on a gentle hill with an open view of the Potomac. In addition to the main mansion, you can also tour the gardens, animal pens, fruit garden and nursey, slave cabin, distillery, gristmill, and more. Guided tours are available. Entrance fee required.

http://www.mountvernon.org/

6. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

One of the saddest places you'll ever visit in Washington; that's true. But its educational value is undeniable. When I visited it years ago I left with teary eyes and a new understanding regarding the evil that scorched Europe back in the 1940s. Also noteworthy is the way the museum is designed to identify you with one of the victims and relive the whole experience through the eyes of that person. A moving and haunting experience.

https://www.ushmm.org/

7. National Bonzai & Penjing Museum

If you need to take a break and enjoy a few serene, sweet and peaceful hours in the heart of Washington DC, then I recommend this small garden specializing in bonzai trees and penjing. A part of the National Arboretum, it's a welcoming relief for the eyes and the soul. A perfect place to reflect on your place in the universe and meditate.

http://www.usna.usda.gov/Gardens/collections/bonsai.html

8. Library of Congress

Needs no introduction. One of the largest libraries in the world sprawled over multiple buildings. Thus before going, make an inquiry in advance to make sure you'll visit the correct building. An amazing collection of printed magazines, books, maps, photos, audio recordings, and all kinds of analog and digital media, including films and videos. Also home to frequent conferences, lectures, and book promotions. If you love books and learning you might want to get on the Library's mailing list.

https://www.loc.gov/

9. National Building Museum

You don't need to be interested in buildings and civil engineering to enjoy this museum. Why? Because it's one of the most jaw-dropping indoor spaces you'll ever see. When you enter the Main Hall of the museum you can't help but lift your head up and remain in that position until you leave to savor the beauty of the magnificent Corinthian columns and the arching space. Check out the beautiful Civil War friezes surrounding the building's exterior.

http://www.nbm.org/

10. Newseum

A concept-based museum dedicated to print, radio, and TV journalism, and the news business in general. Relive many crucial moments in the nation's history through newsreels and newscasts, like the day JFK was shot. Many educational programs and exhibitions throughout the year.

http://www.newseum.org/

UGUR AKINCI, PhD, *a Fortune 100 tech writer, is a past president of the STC Washington DC Baltimore Chapter and STC Associate Fellow. He is sharing free technical communication tips and tutorials since 2007 at* www.tcc6.com

STC Summit Hotel

THE 2017 STC Summit is packed with great sessions, exhibits, and networking events, so why waste your valuable time staying somewhere other than the Gaylord National Resort? All Summit events, including education sessions and the Expo Hall, will take place on one level at the Gaylord, just steps away from your room. You can experience all the Summit has to offer instead of spending time traveling from your hotel to the conference site.

The Gaylord is also surrounded by the area's premier entertainment district the National Harbor, and is only minutes from downtown Washington, DC. In and around the Gaylord are numerous restaurants and activities, such as the Old Hickory Steakhouse, Pienza Marketplace, National Pastime Sports Bar and Grill, Belvedere Lobby Bar, and a little coffee spot called the Cocoa Bean. Just steps away at the National Harbor, you can also enjoy a ride on the Ferris wheel or a boat ride down the Potomac River.

If that's not enough, everyone who books their stay in the STC room block will receive:

- Two complimentary water bottles in the comfort of newly renovated guest rooms
- Daily complimentary high-speed WiFi in your guest room
- Resort-style amenities including a spa and fitness center, indoor pool and six on-site restaurants
- A coupon book with a valued **savings of $100** for area attractions, including the National Harbor

Make sure you visit *http://summit.stc.org/hotel/* to book a room in STC's block and for more details on the great amenities the Gaylord offers. What are you waiting for? Book your stay at the Gaylord National Resort for the 2017 Summit. See you in Washington, DC!

National Harbor

Fix My App at the Summit Closing General Session

THE SUMMIT'S CLOSING general session will feature a live taping of a brand new UX Web show from the creator of Expose UX called Fix My App. Summit attendees will witness first hand—and participate in—the usability testing of a new app. The closing session will be filmed as an episode of Fix My App and will debut later in the year.

Audience members will watch as users attempt to use a startup's new app for the first time during a usability test. It's easy to understand a product after using it a few times, but using it for the first time is when the complications are revealed. After the usability test is complete, a team of user experience experts will collaborate to solve the major problems and advise the app's creators on UX best practices for their app and why the UX problems occurred in the first place.

UX experts include:

- **Lorelei Brown**—15+ years' UX experience at Verizon, Comcast, AOL, PBS, National Association of Realtors
- **Geoffrey Robertson**—UX Research Manager at Discovery Communications
- **Vera Rhoads**—IBM, independent consultant, and 13+ years teaching graduate advanced usability at University of Maryland

The closing general session will also contain remarks from STC's newly installed President, Alyssa Fox.

Intercom 2017 Editorial Calendar

January 2017
No theme
Submission due date: 11/1/2016
Ads due: 11/15/2016

February 2017
Personality, Temperament, and Technical Communication
Guest Editor: Ben Woelk
Submission due date: 12/1/2016
Ads due: 12/15/2016

March 2017
The Core Competencies of Technical Communicators
Submission due date: 1/1/2017
Ads due: 1/15/2017

April 2017
The Business of Technical Communication
Submission due date: 2/1/2017
Ads due: 2/15/2017

May 2017
Legal and Ethical Issues
Submissions due: 3/1/2017
Ads due: 3/15/2017

June 2017
International Technical Communication
Submissions due: 4/1/2017
Ads due: 4/15/2017

July/August 2017
Tools of the Trade
Submissions due: 5/1/2017
Ads due: 5/15/2017

September 2017
Writing and Editing: Fundamentals, Resources, and New Trends
Submissions due: 7/1/2017
Ads due: 7/15/2017

October 2017
Document Design After Paper
Guest Editor: Michael Opsteegh
Submissions due: 8/1/2017
Ads due: 8/15/2017

November/December 2017
Research in Technical Communication: Approaches, Methods, Applications
Guest Editor: Kirk St.Amant
Submissions due: 9/1/2017
Ads due: 9/15/2017

Recognizing and Disclosing Conflicts of Interest

shutterstock/ Minerva Studio

BY BRANDY BIPPES | *Guest Columnist*

Conflicts of interest are nothing new in industry, and technical communicators are just as likely to run into problems as anyone else. But how do we make decisions when we are confronted with questions that might boil down to something as "simple" as family vs. job? After all "conflicts of interest" are conflicts because they ask us to choose between often-inseparable components.

In this month's Ethics column, Brandy Bippes offers one of those "simple" cases for our scrutiny. In doing so, she asks us to consider where our loyalties lie when life gets complicated. She also asks us to think about the sorts of ripples that occur in our lives when we are forced to make these decisions. This month's ethics column, I have to add, is particularly timely given issues that have been in the news recently regarding our new President and his business associations. While our desire is not to take a definitive political stance here, it is *our job to ask you to ask questions about any decisionmaking process related to technical and professional communication. And so, as you read this month's column, we ask that you also apply the questions Brandy asks to the business and power relationships you see taking place around you.*

As always, we welcome your responses. Let us know your answers to the questions we've posed, your thoughts on our roles as technical communicators in general, or send us your own ethics cases or column ideas. Please send your responses to derek.ross@auburn.edu. *Responses will be printed in an upcoming issue of Intercom as space permits.*

—Derek G. Ross

CAROL HAS BEEN a Technical Communications Specialist for Agency 412, a nonprofit organization, for ten years as a co-editor of government grants. A number cruncher, Carol helped Agency 412 receive $1.2 million annually in public grants and government funds.

Agency 412 received many community accolades, including the Mayor's Community Involvement Commendation about eight months ago, just before Carol went into early labor and was forced into an extended hospital stay. Grant co-author Sandra was assigned Carol's duties while she trained a new temporary hire named Justine. Their supervisor, Joe, was anxious to fill Carol's position so the secondary funding renewals could continue as scheduled. Justine's credentials demonstrated a highly-qualified candidate whose background included financial and report-writing experience with a few large-name companies. The urgency of Carol's absence caused Joe to hire Justine without a full background inquiry. Carol's brother Blaine, who had dated

This column features ethics scenarios and issues that may affect technical communicators in the many aspects of their jobs. If you have a possible solution to a scenario, your own case, or feedback in general, please contact column editor Derek G. Ross at *dgr0003@auburn.edu.*

Justine for three years, convinced Carol that Justine would be a good replacement. While Blaine once served two years of probation for petty larceny, his probationary period had ended, and Carol knew her brother had learned his lesson. Carol recommended Justine as her temporary replacement but did not disclose the nature of her relationship with Justine or her brother's legal history.

Carol returned to the office last week. The team briefed her on the current status of the project, noting concern that Carol's expertise in analyzing the quantitative figures had been greatly missed since Justine left three weeks ago. Carol discovered nearly all Justine's reports included figures which didn't match any of the company's historical documents. Additionally, Carol noted the figures used in the original drafts of the funding applications didn't match the final edits that had been modified and approved by Justine. No matter how many times they ran the numbers from the raw data, the team could not reproduce the figures on Justine's reports. Nearly $300,000 in public funding had vanished along with Justine, whose contact information and identity were false.

The Mayor was counting on Agency 412 as the city's flagship agency of public advocacy. Sandra is ashamed she didn't admit her lack of confidence in handling quantitative data. The public funding agent (PFA) refuses to admit wrong-doing in accepting the errant reports because Carol and Agency 412 had always provided accurate data—they believed Agency 412's data to be accurate and authorized the funds without error checking. PFA insists all the funding contracts should be considered null and void, and Joe should be held accountable for the missing funds.

Carol is now several hundred thousand dollars in debt with hospital bills. Carol's husband wants her to accept a position she has been offered across town for a substantial salary increase that also includes a substantial workload increase and travel commitments that will keep her from her family a great deal. This leads to an important question: *Given Carol's position, is supporting her family financially more important than sorting out Agency 412's problems?* Carol's husband has an old back injury which might prevent him from watching their children for more than 4-8 hours per day. Further complicating the issue, Joe helped Carol's husband with some legal matters after his back injury.

Joe—Carol's supervisor—has always been happy with Carol's work. He is confident Carol can sort out the reports and repair the relationships with the funders. Joe offers to take a pay cut for the next twelve months so Carol can have a temporary raise, if Carol will stay to correct the problem. Carol considers this a generous offer, but places a great burden on her with additional duties, long hours, and disclosing her conflicts of interest (COI). The job market is tight. *Should Carol continue to work for Agency 412 with the conditions offered?*

Carol has worked very hard to get where she is in her career. Her reputation rides on her decision to stay at Agency 412 after this scandal. She feels conflicted between her loyalties to her family and her employer. Perhaps she should stick around to repair the damage. *Should she take the job across town and never tell Joe or Agency 412 about Justine?* Neither position, she feels, would afford her time to explore options. She isn't sure the new job would do more than give her a place to start over where she can hide from the truth about Justine and her own involvement.

The Problem

Carol has failed to disclose COI and her close family ties with Justine. Public funds have gone missing. Although Agency 412 rules do not require disclosure of COI, Carol may have an ethical obligation to do so.

Carol's dedication and her close personal connection with her employer have been compromised by a series of complex issues. It's difficult to determine where the problem begins or ends. Her failure to disclose (COI) has become problematic. *Can Carol can walk away and start fresh?* By disclosing her knowledge of Justine, she implicates herself and her brother. *Should she tell Joe, the supervisor who places so much trust in her?*

Current Ethics in the News

Conflicts of interest are nothing new, and are currently in the spotlight at a national level. Donald J. Trump's (DJT) extensive COI and potential nepotism dominate current headlines. Because they are unknown, these matters compound uncertainty whether laws would prohibit his COI or to what extent. *Time*'s Altman reported legal ethics scholars, "urged Trump to take two specific steps to mitigate the appearance or existence of [COI]," by disclosing and divesting his interests, creating a blind trust, and agreeing to avoid further COI. DJT offers the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) many challenges if he refuses to disclose his finances and if his business and personal interests appear to be affected by his position. *MSNBC*'s Todd et al. report DJT's proposed ethics plans to hand over "business operations to his sons and place his assets in a trust" falls short of public interest.

While Carol's case is far removed from that of a President, both cases present a need for well-defined rules of disclosure. Carol's undisclosed COI affected Agency 412's finances while Donald J. Trump's may pose threats to national security. Complex circumstances compounded by

unclear rules and regulations make both cases intriguing.

Ethical Appraisal

Paul Dombrowski (2000) suggests four ways to analyze ethical behavior. Aristotelian ethics encourage focus on what is good, true, and right. Kantian ethics encourage a sense of duty: doing the right thing regardless of personal consequences. Utilitarian ethics encourage balancing good against harm. According to the feminist ethics of care, people should make altruistic decisions that won't be regarded as impersonal governmental self-interests; rather, morality comes from benevolence.

DJT's presidential platform promised to "drain the swamp" of governmental self-interests, but his actions, as reported by many major news outlets, suggest that this might not be the case. Though far removed from DJT's place of power, Carol finds herself in a situation of interesting similarity—both are plagued by ethical problems arising from conflicts of interest. *Is there a model of ethical behavior (either one listed above, or another) under which we might reconsider each player's actions as ethical if they end up making choices that support their own self-interests over those of the people that depend on them? How do these two models (Carols and DJT's) differ? How are they alike?*

Acknowledgments

The author would like to thank Dr. Sam Dragga and Dr. Brian Still for their contributions toward critical analysis of this difficult topic.

BRANDY BIPPES *is a doctoral student at Texas Tech University, studying Technical Communication & Rhetoric (TCR) with a focus on intercultural issues. She holds a dual-focus M.A. English in Rhetoric & Technical Communication and TESL from Eastern Washington University. She brings several years of entrepreneurship combined with international work and study to the field. Her most recent work studies mechanisms that bring international students to U.S. universities. Brandy's passion lies in the interdisciplinary unification of seemingly disparate studies in TCR, TESL, Anthropology, and Linguistics.*

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Dombrowski, P. M. 2000. *Ethics in Technical Communication*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Todd, C., M. Murray, and C. Dann. 2017. Experts Agree Trump's Ethics Plan Falls Short. *MSNBC*. Retrieved from *www.nbcnews.com/politics/first-read/experts-agree-trump-s-ethics-plan-falls-short-n706056*.

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An Interview with Rob Hanna of Precision Content

BY SCOTT ABEL | *STC Senior Member*

IN THIS INSTALLMENT of Meet the Change Agents, I chat with Rob Hanna of Precision Content about his desire to bring best practices from several content creation methods together to better serve the needs of both content creators and content consumers. We discuss the changes taking place today in the field of technical communication, why companies should invest heavily in prerequisite skills, education, and understanding how humans interact with content.

Scott Abel: Thanks for agreeing to chat with me today. For those readers who may not know who you are, tell us a little about yourself. Who are you and what do you do?

Rob Hanna: Thanks, Scott. I've been a professional technical communicator for almost 20 years. Before that, I didn't know there was a name—let alone a profession—to describe the work I did. Now I own a company employing a team of technical writers, developers, and information architects serving businesses across North America. You can learn more about us at *PrecisionContent.com*.

My career in technical communication began in 1997 as a lone technical writer working with close to 100 engineers at a large aerospace company in Montreal, Canada. These folks had assembled an extensive system for topic-based authoring to document software requirements and design specifications using databases, a code management system, and Generalized Markup Language (GML)—a precursor to Standard Generalized Markup Language (SGML). The system was a thing of beauty—process, product, and people in perfect harmony. While it was elegant, it wasn't ideal: engineers toiling over green screen terminals to hand-code their documentation using an archaic markup language, all to produce binders of printed documentation. I've dedicated my career to building the ideal system in a similar image—a balance of people, process, and technology.

I have served the Society for Technical Communication (STC) in several roles at the local and international level—from 2007 to 2009 as a director on the STC board, then several years on the STC Body of Knowledge and Certification Commission. Today I mainly serve the Toronto Chapter as a mentor to new and aspiring technical communicators.

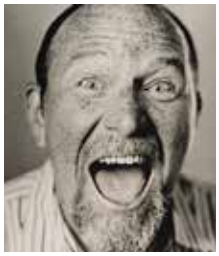
SA: We've talked a lot about our shared goals. For the past decade or more, I have been working to convince technical communication professionals that their value isn't writing, per se. I know you think similarly. As a change agent and thought leader, you're hoping to affect change as well. What kind of change do you think is necessary to help elevate our profession?

RH: My time in the STC has helped me to realize that our profession is destined to assume a much greater role within the enterprise. We have the necessary skills to be the guardians of business information. When the day comes that the real value of information takes its rightful place on corporate balance sheets, the expertise of technical communicators will be called upon to secure the growth of these highly-valued assets.

It is our duty as leaders in our profession to advance the science and state-of-the-art in technical communication. We must strive to push technical communicators beyond our traditional roles within technical publication departments and into supporting roles across the enterprise.

As technical communicators, our greatest benefit to the organizations we serve doesn't lie solely with serving our customers. It lies with serving the needs of our colleagues to help build better products and provide superior service.

SA: You're an evangelist for advanced information management solutions. The Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA), component content management, and dynamic content delivery are practical



In the digital age, change happens quickly. This column features interviews with the movers and shakers—the folks behind new ideas, standards, methods, products, and amazing technologies that are changing the way we live and interact in our modern world. Got questions, suggestions, or feedback? Email them to *scottabel@mac.com*.

solutions to some technical documentation challenges. But, one size seldom fits all. That's one reason you created a hybrid methodology called Precision Content. What is Precision Content, exactly? Why do we need it?

RH: I've been a follower of DITA since first reading Michael Priestley's article in *Technical Communication* in 2001. I've since become a contributor to the DITA standard through my participation in the OASIS Darwin Information Typing Architecture (DITA) Technical Committee. I am a DITA evangelist not because it is the perfect embodiment of technical communication but because it is a standard. Further, it is a standard with considerable uptake in our profession. This fact alone makes it an essential component towards advancing the science of technical communication.

Having a standard is a great start, but it isn't enough on its own. To construct an optimal content ecosystem, we need a balance of:

- *Utility*—content must be in a form that is useful
- *Maintainability*—content must be managed, and
- *Usability*—content must be written to suit its function.

With DITA we get exceptional utility for our content. The DITA framework allows us to leverage content in ways we never could before. Our community of tool vendors has made working with semantically rich markup easier than ever. This ease of use extends beyond authoring to include every aspect needed to maintain the investment in content management. We've come a long way from the hand-coding of markup on a terminal.

The frequently overlooked piece of the equation is usability. Companies are investing heavily in the design and implementation of technology without regard for the prerequisite skills needed to use the system effectively. These investments go well beyond training writers to use software. Technology only takes us so far. We must look at the essential skills and quality standards necessary to author for these systems.

Teaching writers how to author intelligent content in a topic-based system requires a robust, universal content standard. Content standards inform writers how to author content that aligns with the structures, semantics, and reuse mechanisms we have designed into our solutions.

Creating content to a standard like DITA requires both discipline in writing and rigor in content creation and management processes. Each is needed to ensure content quality.

SA: As humans, we can't help but build new ideas upon previous knowledge and experiences. Everything is a remix. From where do the ideas, concepts, and standards for Precision Content come?

RH: Eight years ago I was working on the Enterprise Business Document DITA Subcommittee led by Ann Rockley and Michael Boses. The Subcommittee was attempting to define a series of standards that would extend DITA beyond technical publications. My role was to gather information about existing content models with which we could work.

I approached Information Mapping Canada to invite them to join the conversation on the subcommittee. Information Mapping was developing and teaching a structured writing methodology. The company had sister organizations around the globe that had been teaching the standards to businesses for 20 years. And very interestingly, I found that the Information Mapping methodology seemed to align closely with DITA.

One year and several white papers later, the subcommittee went into hiatus without advancing a formal proposal for a set of new standards. I continued the work on my own to blend DITA with Information Mapping content standards. I studied the rules and eventually became a certified expert in Information Mapping. From there, I was able to adapt and modernize the methods with new research and develop new practices for authoring intelligent content. These new standards eventually became what we now call Precision Content.

SA: Why is Information Mapping—or DITA—alone insufficient to tackle today's content challenges?

RH: I've worked with many Fortune 100 companies over the past ten years, helping them transition to structured authoring. I've collaborated with leading-edge technology companies—and some very smart people—to design and develop best-of-breed DITA solutions. Invariably the one critical flaw in any of our solutions has been the lack of attention to retraining, skills development, and quality assurance processes. DITA is complicated and requires training be provided to authors to ensure they

use the standard to create consistent, high-quality output.

Also, DITA was initially designed to develop support documentation for high-tech products. And it does an excellent job of this, providing authors with 80 to 90 percent of the semantic structures they will ever need to support that kind of content. But once we move outside of technical publications, we see a significant increase in the types of semantic elements required to support enterprise content. DITA does not currently possess that support out-of-the-box. DITA is an ideal technology framework, but it is not a content standard.

Information Mapping, on the other hand, is a trainable content standard that has stood the test of time with organizations around the globe. It is backed up by decades of practice and published research. And still, it has failed to attract the attention it deserves from technical publication groups mainly due to costs and licensing restrictions. It has also failed to evolve over time, lacking more recent research and incorporation of new technologies.

We've also found that Information Mapping can be difficult to institutionalize within an organization, in part due to technology limitations. Information Mapping is still taught using a Microsoft Word-based application. This approach is suitable for small documents, but it is tough to use when creating larger documents. It's also challenging on projects that require collaboration amongst content creators.

By streamlining parts of the Information Mapping methodology and adapting the DITA framework, we've been able to create an approach that better suits modern content development lifecycles and practices.

Half of the writers on my team are experts in Information Mapping; the other half, DITA pros. When both groups began using our new approach, an interesting thing happened. At first, both teams found the combination of the constraints of the DITA XML and the limitations of the writing standards made their work more onerous. But they soon discovered they were creating fewer words and writing in a more focused manner. Writers from both groups described the new writing style as more precise. Thus the term Precision Content was coined.

SA: Why is Precision Content valuable outside of pure-play technical communication projects?

RH: Organizations today have complex requirements for their high-value content. The need for speed, efficiency, collaboration, globalization, personalization, and multichannel dynamic content delivery are placing significant pressures on departments outside of technical publications. But, there is no magic, one-size-fits-all solution. Content creators need simple yet effective tools, new processes and standards, and practical training. Many will also need support and guidance as they attempt to navigate the many changes that accompany content transformation projects. Our writers and trainers work alongside the client's in-house writers to create new quality benchmarks for their content.

New approaches like Precision Content will help us overcome many of these challenges. And, they provide us with greater opportunities to automate processes and improve the utility of content.

But more than anything else, content creators must buy into the real—and visible—usability improvements these changes can help us make to our content. Improved usability is dependent on the introduction—and enforcement of—a robust content standard.

SA: Neuroscience and content go hand in hand. Experts like Dr. Carmen Simon of RexiMedia have been making a case for producing useful and memorable content and mapping our ideas to the way the human brain works. What lessons from neuroscience have you adopted for Precision Content?

RH: That's a big subject area, Scott. Fundamentally, I believe that a universal content standard must be rooted in neuroscience and cognitive research.

There is a broad body of research about how our brains analyze, organize, and retain new ideas. Unfortunately, there is little direct evidence to help us better understand how our brains interact with content. Our Precision Content methodology is based on existing science from Information Mapping as well as new evidence from experts such as Dr. Carmen Simon and Dr. George Gopen. We continue to invest in research and development in an attempt to build better tools and guide the evolution of our content standards.

We recently presented a 2-part series on the cognitive science behind intelligent content that is available on The Content Wrangler channel on *BrightTalk.com*. I recommend readers check out the free recorded presentations if they want to learn more about this topic.

SA: Unfortunately, all good things come to an end and we're at the end of our time today. Thanks for sharing your knowledge and experience with us, Rob. I appreciate it—and I know our readers do as well.

RH: Thanks for the opportunity, Scott. It's been a pleasure.

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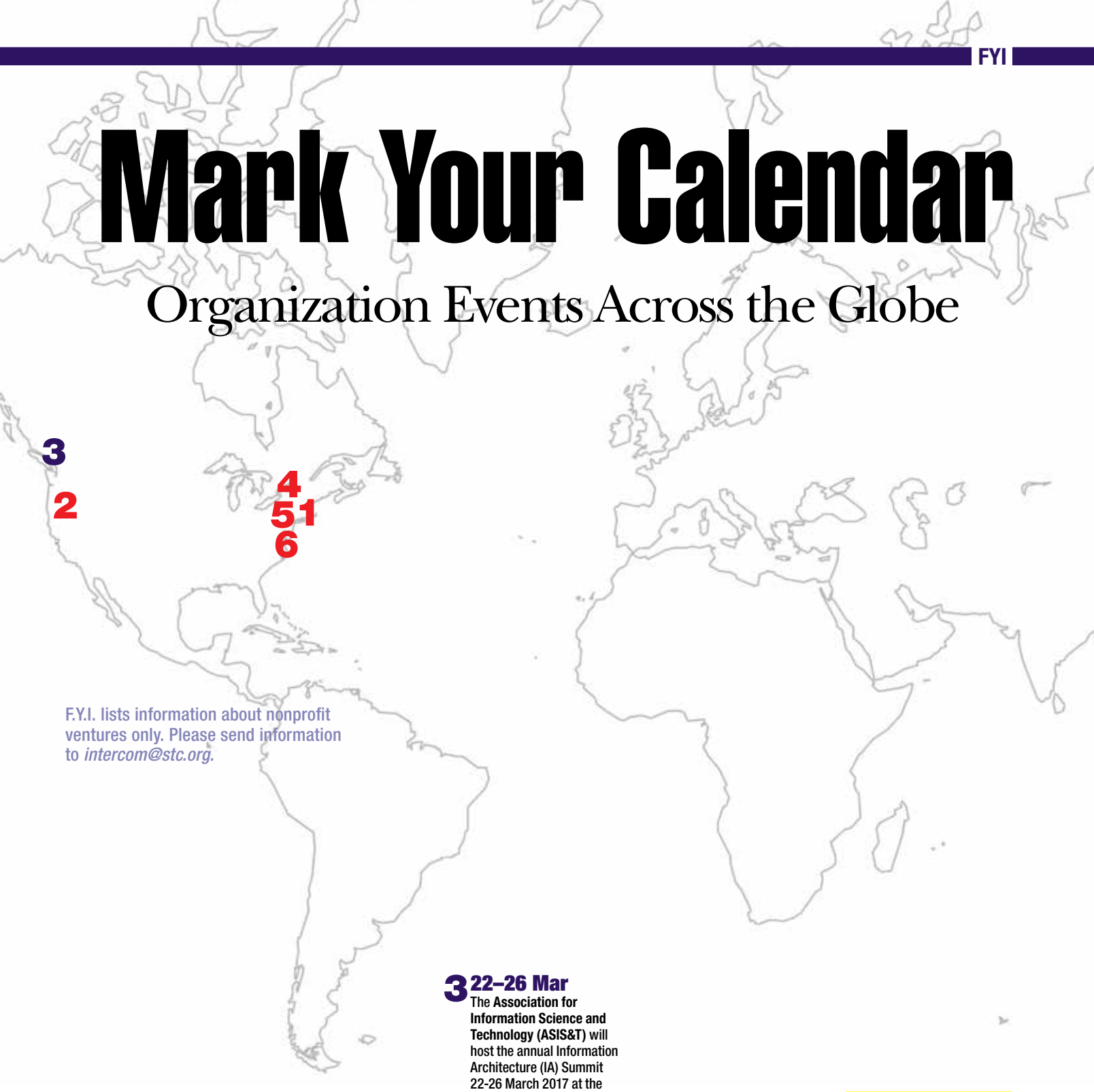
Organization Events Across the Globe



F.Y.I. lists information about nonprofit ventures only. Please send information to *intercom@stc.org.*

1 16–20 Feb
The 2017 **American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)** annual meeting will be held 16-20 February 2017 at the Hynes Convention Center in Boston, MA.
AAAS
http://meetings.aaas.org/
meetings@aaas.org

2 16 Mar
The **Association of Teachers of Technical Writing (ATTW)** will celebrate its 20th anniversary at its 2017 annual conference, 15 May in Portland, OR, at the Doubletree by Hilton Portland.
ATTW
http://attw.org/conference

3 22–26 Mar
The **Association for Information Science and Technology (ASIS&T)** will host the annual Information Architecture (IA) Summit 22-26 March 2017 at the Hyatt Regency Vancouver in Vancouver, BC, Canada.
ASIS&T
http://www.iasummit.org/

4 26–28 Mar
The **Annual Spectrum STC Rochester Conference** will be held 26-28 March, 2017.
STC Rochester
http://stc-rochester.org/spectrum/
spectrum@stc-rochester.org

5 31 Mar–1 Apr
The **Annual Conduit STC-Philadelphia Metro Chapter Mid-Atlantic TechComm Conference** will be held 31 March through 1 April in Philadelphia.
STC-PMC
www.stcpmc.org/conferences/conduit-2017

6 7–10 May
The **Society for Technical Communication** will host its 64th Annual Summit at the Gaylord National Resort, just outside Washington, DC. For more information, please contact:
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* STC-related event

Why CPTC Was Right for Me and Why It Could Be Right for You

BY MARYKAY GRUENEBERG |
STC Associate Fellow

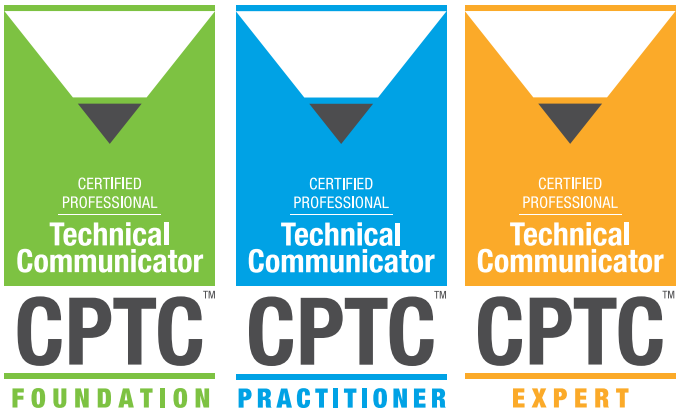
IF YOU DON'T THINK CPTC certification is right for you, you may want to think again.

When I first heard about certification a couple of years ago, my initial thought was "oh, that's for young college grads, that's certainly not for someone who has over 30 years of experience in the tech comm field." And I promptly forgot about it. Then, last Spring at the Summit, I attended the info session on becoming a Certified Professional Technical Communicator. I wanted to know what all the fuss was about. I have to admit, after the session, I was still a little on the fence, but I was definitely more intrigued. The thing I really liked was that it is not a "one and done" thing. You don't just take a test and then go on as you did before. Getting your certification (Foundation level) means you have demonstrated both knowledge and understanding of the best practices in technical communication. Keeping your certification means that you complete specific continuing education requirements, showing that you continue to stay current. The more I thought about that concept, the more excited I got about getting certified.

After the Summit ended, a group of us got together through Slack and starting working through the book on which the certification test questions are based. While it was fun and helpful to be able to ask others questions and work through the sample questions together, I am not patient enough to take things slowly, so I completed my studies on my own and passed the test at the end of June. But then I thought "Well, I'm certified. Now what? I already have a full-time job, so what good is this?" And then it happened….

Just one month later, I was told that my department was getting reorganized and my position had become "redundant." I had just 30 days to find and secure a position inside the company or be without a job altogether. I work for a very large, global company, but still there were no openings in the United Sates I had to get creative. So, I reached out to every hiring manager literally across the globe. As I talked with them, they asked about my involvement with STC and about the CPTC. They all commented on the fact that I had taken initiative with my continuing education and noted that no one else had certification. I was told, "With credentials and experience like yours, we can't afford to let you go. We will find you something." And they did. They actually created a position for me. During the discussions surrounding the details, I was asked at what level I was at in the company and I told them. They said that didn't seem right "considering your professional credentials and experience." I agreed. In the end, I not only ended up with a new position within the 30 days, I also got a promotion to boot.

So, if you don't think certification is for you, just remember this: degrees and certificates in your chosen field are good. Certification is better. Degrees get stale, the educational content gets outdated. Certification, however, ensures that you are always staying current with technology, communication trends, and best practices. Certification shows you are invested. And sometimes, when you least expect it, that may just make all the difference!



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- Opens up job opportunities and enhances job mobility;
- Elevates the profession;
- Gives you a sense of pride in your career; and
- Demonstrates your commitment to the field.

The CPTC credential gives you the edge you need to stand out to employers.

Continuing Education Requirements

Points may be obtained the following ways:

Event	Points
STC Annual Membership (any membership type for Foundation certificants)	2
STC Recorded Webinar (self-study)	1
STC Live Educational Webinar (free, sponsored, and community webinars excluded)	2
STC Online Courses	6
STC Summit Pre-Conference Courses (full day)	6
STC Summit Pre-Conference Courses (half day)	3
STC Virtual Summit	4
STC Annual Summit	8
Begin and complete a college-accredited course related to the Technical Communication field	8
Published articles that relate to any aspect of Technical Communication (2/article)	2
Published books publicly available on topics related to Technical Communication (5/book)	5
Presentations at conferences related to aspects of Technical Communication (2/presentation)	2
Total needed within 2 years post-certification date	**12**

Fees

Exam fees: STC Members $250, Non-Members, $495

Be a leader. ***Take your career to the next level by obtaining your credential. It's the most efficient way to prove your skills and knowledge in the technical communication field.***

Advance your Career and the Profession — Earn the CPTC Foundation Credential Today!
Learn more at www.stc.org/certification